

THE
NORTHERN WITNESS.

EDITED BY

JOHN R. CALDWELL

VOL. X.

GLASGOW:

THE PUBLISHING OFFICE, 40 SAUCHIEHALL STREET.

LONDON:

JAMES E. HAWKINS, 36 BAKER STREET, W., AND 12 PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.

DUBLIN: DUBLIN TRACT REPOSITORY, 10 D'OLIER STREET.

1880.

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LONDON

 JAMES E. HAWKINS,
 12 Paternoster Sq., E.C.,
 and 36 Baker Street, W.

 JANUARY,
 1880.

GLASGOW

 GEO. TURNER & Co.,
 40 Sauchichall Street.

H O N E S T Y.

“Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles”
 (1 Peter ii. 12).

THIS is a dishonest age. The world's political, commercial, and social life is poisoned with dishonesty, and few even of the children of God have thoroughly disentangled themselves from its principles and ways.

P O L I T I C A L.

As to politics—when the Christian enters that domain he finds that he has drifted into a latitude so far from the course of the children of light that he searches in vain for Scripture words or principles to guide him. The waters he attempts to sail in are not in his heavenly chart, therefore instead of steering by the Word of God, enlightened and led by His Spirit, he is left to the direction of “his own understanding.”

The Christian's only relationship to “The powers that be,” is subjection. Read carefully Rom. xiii. 1-8; Titus iii. 1; 1 Pet. ii. 13-17.

Of course if the world's power be so anti-christian as to command what God has forbidden, or to forbid what God has commanded, then subjection to God as the “higher power” may necessitate insubjection to the world's government. See an instance of this in Acts iv. 19, 20. But even here the principle that guides is subjection to authority, not self-will.

If this be so, let the Christian's subject relationship to the powers that be, be maintained in thorough honesty.

There are some whose conscience would not suffer

them to defraud an individual, yet they scruple not at using crooked means to evade a government tax.

But he who is one of the children of light ought so to act in every detail of his life, that he is not afraid of the light. If he fills up his income tax return truthfully as under the eye of God, then he need not fear if the inspector challenges his return and examines his books. “Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good.”

Moreover in paying tribute (or taxes)—whether imposed by the Imperial Government, like the income tax and receipt stamps, or by the civil authorities, such as the police, school board, or poor rates—not only will he pay what is honestly due, but he ought to do so ungrudgingly. Many forget that they receive value for their money in paying taxes quite as really as in paying their baker's bill. The Christian ought above all others to pay cheerfully and thankfully for the inestimable privileges of peace, protection, and liberty, recognizing these to be peculiarly of the grace of God in an age where Satan is the world's prince and god.

To seek exemption upon some shuffling pretext which will not bear the light, whether it be the income tax, the dog tax, or a *receipt stamp*, is simply DISHONESTY.

C O M M E R C I A L.

As to business, much more must needs be touched upon, for here it is, beyond all other spheres, where the cancer of covetousness eats away the spiritual life, and dishonesty runs rampart under the guise of legitimate business practices.

In these days, beyond all precedent, young men are not contented to be servants, they want to be masters.

To be under authority is irksome to pride and self-will. The exhortation, "Mind not high things but be contented with mean things" (Rom. xii. 16, see margin), finds a response in few hearts. To be "up" in the social scale seems to be almost as much the desire of many Christians as of those who know not God. Hence the frequency with which one hears of young men beginning business "on their own account."

It is not for a moment to be supposed that such a course is *always* indicative of a low spiritual condition. It may be perfectly right and be gone into in the fear of the Lord and with His blessing. But such practical subjects are so seldom referred to by those who minister the Word of God, and young Christians are so often "like sheep without a shepherd," a prey to Satan through ignorance and inexperience, that we deem it necessary to write plainly on such matters.

In the first place, let any who think of "going into business on their own account" enquire at their own hearts the *motive*. Honesty in this would greatly conduce to honesty throughout.

If the motive be self-will, pride, or covetousness, how then can the blessing of God be hoped for? Will He not rather bring it to nought?

Further, let inquiry be made as to the nature of the business, and whether in carrying it on, the conscience can be maintained undefiled before God.

Again, all business (excepting a purely commission business) involves certain risks, greater or less, according to the extent of the transactions. It may be the shilling risks of a smallware shop, or it may be the thousands of pounds of a wholesale business. But in each case there is risk of loss.

Many begin business, and incur risks, *without capital*, or upon borrowed money.

To *state* that borrowed money is capital is simply a lie. The world often makes a statement like this, and believes it is near enough the truth, but the Christian ought to be above it.

Whether the person beginning business be without capital, or be in possession only of borrowed money, in either case the risk of loss falls altogether upon others; the profit, if any, goes to the person himself. Plainly such a transaction is dishonest. If God has not given the capital, then God does not mean the person to be in business "on his own account."

Two godly persons might commence business together in partnership, the one having knowledge, the other

having money, this might be carried out to the glory of God, provided both are Christians; but for one to begin without means, and to *risk* what is *not his own*, is not common morality.

When such a business fails, how greatly is the name of the Lord and His truth blasphemed! How do the enemies triumph! How is the Gospel hindered! Men say it is all humbug and cant, let us see HONESTY. And God means the world to see honesty in His saints.

"Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." "Let us walk honestly, as in the day." "We trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly."

In the conducting of the details of business, especially in buying and in selling, there is a continual temptation to dishonesty and untruthfulness. He who will be truthful and honest may make up his mind that it will cost him something. In the long run he may find that even the world's very low proverb is true, "Honesty is the best policy." But in some lines of traffic it is increasingly difficult to live honestly, and the success of such a principle may not appear in this life, though it surely will at "the judgment seat of Christ."

There be some who have wrong thoughts about "living by faith." It is a great mistake to suppose that a Christian is incapable of living by faith, because he "buys in the cheapest market, and sells in the dearest." It is his duty to do so, but to do it honestly and truthfully requires faith in the living God. Only he who is trusting God, and who realizes that he has "a Master in heaven," is permanently above the boastful laudation of his own wares and disparagement of others, which is the coveted art of the world's "good salesman." Nor will any lower principle than faith in God save him from the sin of the proverb, "It is nought, it is nought, saith the buyer: but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth" (Prov. xx. 14).

The Christian business man ought above all things to be upright, straightforward, truthful, honest, so that his every word and act is above suspicion, and commands the entire confidence of both buyer and seller. Thus will his life be a commendation, constant and influential, of the Gospel for which he testifies.

When God was legislating for Israel, His command was, "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in mete-yard, in weight, or in measure. Just balances,

just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have" (Lev. xix. 35, 36). "A false balance is abomination to the Lord" (Prov. xi. 1). God's principles are the same still. "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness" (Ps. xi. 7). Surely the paltry gain obtained by injustice is dearly bought, at the expense of a good conscience and communion with God.

SOCIAL.

Christian servants not unfrequently forget that to their employers the loss of time is equivalent to the loss of money. They would scorn to take a penny from their employer's purse, they would neither beg it nor steal it; but they have no hesitation in wasting half-hours by the score of their employer's time. This is simply dishonest. Servants are exhorted "to show all good fidelity in all things." That means that they are to be thoroughly trustworthy, as much so in the absence as before the face of their master or mistress. "Eye-service" is a Scripture abomination, and signifies that God is not the One that is being served, but self. To be diligent before faces, and negligent behind backs, is another form of dishonesty.

Another exhortation to servants is, "not purloining." That means appropriating very little or trifling things that belong to another. Many a household servant would not steal a penny, but would use a hundred of her mistress's pins. Is this too small a matter to notice? Then let the servant answer, would the pins be systematically taken under the mistress's eye? Certainly not. They are taken behind backs, and this, which we adduce because it is the smallest conceivable instance of the thing, is what Scripture calls "purloining."

The faithful discharge of duty is of incalculable weight in commending the truth to the conscience of employers and of fellow-servants. What an example of this was Daniel! No fault could be found in him, except concerning the law of his God.

The heads of households are exhorted to "provide things honest in the sight of all men" (Rom. xii. 17). Again it is written, "If any provide not for his own, especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1 Tim. v. 8).

Hence many exhortations to "work with the hands," to "profess honest trades," and so on, in order that wives and children and other dependent relations might not want, or become a burden upon the liberality of the church. If God gives prosperity, it is not faith but

folly to suppose that such will always continue. The wisdom given to Joseph was to make the seven years of plenty avail for the seven years of famine that were to follow. Extravagance in the time of prosperity brings poverty in the time of adversity. He who preaches that it is not faith to lay by for a "rainy day," has to be debtor in the time of want to the one who did lay by. To "lay up for yourselves treasure on earth," condemned by the Lord is a very different thing from godly foresight and provision for the necessities of one's own household. To be penniless, and cast upon the church's funds at every period of dull trade, or every time of sickness, generally evinces not faith in God, but a want of thorough honesty and independence of man. If money be *the treasure*, if it be trusted in rather than the living God, then sooner or later God will prepare the worm and blast the gourd.

Some Christians are sadly lacking in a sense of honour concerning getting into debt. The Scripture rule is, "Owe no man anything, but to love one another" (Rom. xiii. 8).

To purchase that which you have no prospect of being able to pay for, is glaring dishonesty.

Yet sad it is, that many times those who have made high profession as Christians, have been discovered to be in debt on all hands.

Trying circumstances, long continued want of work, or protracted sickness, may bring the most honest and honourable to want, from which he may see no escape, but to borrow. The exhortation to those who have this world's goods is, to "Do good and lend, not hoping to receive." To have fellowship in the need of such is a precious privilege.

But surely under such trying circumstances, it would be better to ask counsel and help of some godly and experienced Christian, than to run hopelessly into debt to the ungodly. Such a course may be humbling to pride, but even so honoured a servant of God as Elijah had to ask a widow for a morsel of bread!

J. R. C.

THE head is dull in discerning the value of God's expedients; and the heart cold, sluggish, and reluctant in submitting to them: but the head is lively in the invention of its own expedients; and the heart eager and sanguine in the pursuit of them. No wonder, then, that God subjects both the head and the heart to a course of continual correction.

"WHAT IS MEANT BY BELIEVING ON
THE SON OF GOD?"

FIRST. In its nature: I hold the belief here spoken of, to be the gracious and supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the elect sinner (John xvi. 8-10; 1 Cor. xii. 3). But—

SECOND. In its character, it is the reception from the heart of "the record that God hath given of His Son" (Rom. x. 9; 1 John v. 10-12). This reception, while it includes the assent of the intellect, at the same time includes a far more intimate spiritual knowledge. It never is the belief of bare propositions that saves the soul: propositions, however weighty, must guide us to the Person who is the essence of the testimony, and they are made use of for this end by the same Holy Ghost who enlightens our carnal understanding to see the real truth. The belief of the testimony, or record concerning the Son of God, our Saviour, is but the porch of the building through which we pass into the audience-chamber and meet the living inhabitant, full of light and life and love. Yes, the Christian does and must believe in Christ intellectually; but this intellectual knowledge is but the introductory channel to a far higher and closer personal acquaintance. He believes in Christ not merely as an historical personage, as he believes in Mahomet, or Luther, or Napoleon: he believes in Him not merely as a magnificent theological idea, as he believes the doctrine of election, of atonement, of justification: but he believes in Him as a Living Person. And though he has never with his natural eyes beheld "the form of the Son of God:" though he has never with his outward ears heard the voice of Him who "spake as never man spake:" though he has had no opportunity, like Thomas, of "putting his finger in the print of the nails, or thrusting his hand into His side," nevertheless he does as truly realize the Saviour's existence, merit, and love, as if he had done all these things.

We must ever remember that the Gospel is "the Gospel of Jesus Christ" (Mark i. 1). It is not an abstract science, it is not a mere scheme of doctrines, it is not an elaborate and beautiful theory, but it is the truth embodied in a living Person. The true preaching of it is the exhibition of that Person: the true reception of it is becoming acquainted with that Person, and the true experience and enjoyment of it is in communion

with that Person (Col. i. 28; John xvii. 3; John i. 3). It is this that gives the Gospel its own divine power and life. In it we have to do with a living Person—"in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. ii. 3): a living Person who is so low that man can see Him, and yet so high that God can be seen in Him; a living Person who is "bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh," and yet is "God over all blessed for evermore." Yes! and it is on this Person that the Christian's faith is fixed: it is in this Person that the Christian's necessities are met and satisfied: and it is around this Person that the Christian's deepest and holiest affections are for evermore entwined.

DAVID.

WE come now to a period in David's life, the facts and circumstances of which affected him for the remainder of his days; he carried the fruit of them to the grave.

The insult offered by the king of the Ammonites, in return for David's kind condolence, led to war and bloodshed.

Israel met the Ammonites and their allies in the field, routed and conquered them; the Ammonites were beaten, and their allies made peace with Israel.

At the return of the year David sent forth his army under Joab to destroy Rabbah of the Ammonites; but David *tarried at home*. He spared himself, but exposed his people to the hardships and dangers of war.

This his first step of self-indulgence paved the way for his subsequent fall and sorrow. By idleness he placed himself, for the time, at Satan's disposal, who, watching his opportunity, and well knowing David's weak point, namely, undisciplined natural affection, presented the suited temptation, and conquered the king of Israel.

Rising from his bed, and walking on the roof of his house—to please himself we suppose—he saw that which carried off his heart. He was led away of his own lust, and enticed; the lust of the eye conceived and brought forth sin, and sin finished in the accomplished act, brought forth its sad and sorrowful fruit.

Beloved reader, whether old or young—babe, young man, or father, in the divine life, let us together be admonished and warned. Admonished to seek from God self-knowledge, knowledge of our weak points,

the thing or things in connection with which Satan most easily overcomes us; and on such points let us set double watch, ceasing from our own imagined wisdom and strength, and trusting the Lord to guide and keep us. Let us also take warning against idleness, against shrinking from service, trial or sorrow—against spiritual sloth, and also the disinclination for bodily exercise, if you have strength for it. Let us not be slothful in *this* business of *occupying* until He come, lest we prove the truth of one of Dr. Watt's admirable hymns, for children, two lines of which are as below:

“For Satan finds some mischief still,
For *idle* hands to do.”

It was so with David, and the mighty fell; the man of God, the man after God's own heart, got to himself a blot. He went on hot coals, was burnt, and smarted indeed for his act.

He sinned, grievously sinned, against God; but failing to see it, forgetting the eye of God for the moment, his mind defiled, his conscience deadened, his soul darkened, the thought of shame and revenge from man filled his mind, and he began to devise and carry out a plan for covering his sin. He did, or attempted to do, that which Job implies he did not. “If I have covered my transgressions as Adam,” or, “as the sons of men do” (see margin). David “kept silence” in confession, but “roared” in disquietude in himself (Psalm xxxii. 3,4.)

But his plans all failed, the fig leaves would not serve him to hide his sin, and at last he had recourse to the fatal stratagem of taking the life of the injured husband; he sent a letter to Joab by Uriah's hand, and Joab following its instructions caused Uriah to fall.

To all these secret acts, Jehovah, David's God, was privy; His eye saw, His ear heard, but left His backsliding servant to be filled with his own ways, until his backsliding reproved him, and his sins corrected him; for the guilt of adultery and blood rested on His servant.

Time passed on, Bathsheba's mourning days ended, and David took her to be his wife. “But it displeased Jehovah.”

All this must have occupied considerable time, and David's conscience was still under the darkening, hardening power of sin; at length Jehovah's time arrived for arousing him, and Nathan was sent in love

and grace to effect it, and deliver Jehovah's solemn message. The prophet came with the well known parable of “the ewe lamb,” which so faithfully described the selfish, cruel conduct of the man of God; yet he failed to apply it, nor perceived its point; for growing angry with the unmerciful man, he sentenced him to make restitution, and then to death.

Sin, dear fellow-believer is never seen in its true light while the conscience is under its defiling power; no evil is rightly viewed until we are delivered from it: it dims the spiritual vision, deadens conscience, perverts the judgment, deadens spiritual sensibility, and darkens the soul. It was so with beloved David, for he was still David, i.e., “Beloved;” and Jehovah proved it to him; for nothing short of the desired application of the parable, and charge of sin, would suffice to bring the prodigal to himself, and then to God.

Nathan, in Jehovah's message, said “Thou art the man.” The prophet then reminded him of his conduct, and rehearsed Jehovah's acts of grace and mercy towards him, and at length drew from David the simple full confession, “I have sinned against Jehovah.” The point desired was gained, and the prophet had the needed answer ready, “Jehovah hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die;” nevertheless, because by his conduct he had opened the mouth of Jehovah's enemies to blaspheme, the child was sentenced to die—“The child shall die.”

Yes, forgiven but chastened; freely, fully pardoned, but subjected to a life-long discipline, easily traced in his after history. Thus, by the death of the child (fruit of his sin), and by the abiding of the sword on his house for life, was the freely forgiven one corrected.

“When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.” The children of God are always distinguishable from the world in God's sight, and He distinguishes them from the world by the very correction for their sin, when they fail practically to distinguish themselves.

Lot was known to Jehovah as His child, and He rescued him from Sodom's doom. Although Lot confounded himself too much with Sodomites, and, whilst saved as a child from the judgment of Sodom, he was as a witness for God in it, *lost*.

Dear reader, remember this, that you may be *saved*,

and *lost* at the same time; saved eternally *in* Christ, but, as a faithful witness *for* the Lord Jesus Christ, lost in the world. The Lord in His grace, grant to you and to me, the *double* salvation.

Jehovah's mind was accomplished. The child sickened and died. David fasted and prayed until he heaved of its death, then arose, washed, and anointed himself, ate and drank, and comforted his wife. His conduct during the child's sickness, seems to imply that he did not regard the sentence of death as absolute, "The child *shall surely* die," but in accordance with the dispensation in general, namely, the *condition of repentance* being understood, although not mentioned, see his answer to the enquiry of his servants (2 Sam. xii. 20-24).

We have an example of this, also, in connection with Nineveh. Jonah's preaching was absolute. "Yet forty days, and Nineveh *shall be overthrown.*" But the king and his subjects appear to have understood, or at least hoped, that in the event of their repenting, the judgment would be averted; they understood the condition. They did repent, and the judgment was averted. But in David's case it was not so. Jehovah would take vengeance on his inventions, although He forgave him his sin, He would not allow the fruit of his sin to remain, so, "On the seventh day the child died."

Amid, and in spite of all this sin and sorrow, Jehovah's purpose stood, and He remembered His promise to David, of a son, a man of peace who should fulfil his father's counsel, and carry out his plans. David comforted his wife Bethsheba, and she bare him a son, Solomon, "The man of peace." Jedidiah, "Beloved of Jehovah." Jehovah loved and named the child, and David doubtless rejoiced.

He rejoiced, but his joy was chastened joy; Jehovah blessed him, but the blessing was balanced by sorrow, for fornication in the family circle led to murder, rebellion, and again to death.

Amnon the fornicator was not punished according to the law of Moses, but Absalom, by a stratagem took his life, to avenge the wrong done to his sister, plunging David into sorrow, while he himself fled for his life.

Absalom fled, but with the guilt of Amnon's blood upon him, and although David spared his life, Jehovah maintained His own law in its integrity, and eventually brought evil upon Absalom.

Saul in his *haste* would have killed Jonathan without

cause, David in his *lenity* spared his guilty son. Flesh is never right with God.

Absalom was three years in Geshur. And David mourned for Amnon; at length he was comforted for Amnon, and longed to go forth unto Absalom. Joab perceiving this, employed a wise woman, whom he instructed to bring about a speech in favour of Absalom, the banished son; the plan succeeded, and Absalom was brought back, yet saw not the king's face for two whole years. Subsequently he saw his father's face, and David *kissed* Absalom.

The eye of Jehovah was still on David, nor did He forget His words spoken to him by Nathan. David must again feel the point of the sword of loving chastisement. Absalom, attractive in person, plausible in manners, and a flatterer, ingratiated himself with the people to the disparagement of David, and his rule; acting the rebel and usurper.

Absalom was a striking shadow of the Antichrist, who will be everything that can attract and delude the men of the world; he will be the people's man, the man of the earth.

Absalom succeeded in stealing the hearts of the people, the men of Israel. Having gained his point, he went a step further, and, under a religious pretext of performing a vow made during his banishment, asked leave of his father to go to Hebron, and David little suspecting, I imagine, his real object, namely, to be made king there, allowed him to go.

The conspiracy increased continually, and even Ahithophel, David's counsellor, joined them. This must have been a deep sorrow to David, but he turned readily to Jehovah, and, while the history gives us his prayer, "Jehovah! turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness," the Psalms open to us his very heart (Psalm iii.; lv. 12-16).

His prayer against Ahithophel's counsel was answered in part. The first step advised by him was taken by Absalom, for it fulfilled Jehovah's word respecting David, for his *secret* sin with Bathsheba (2 Sam. xii. 11, 12); but the second time he advised, the counsel, good in itself for Absalom, was overruled by Jehovah on David's behalf, and Jehovah defeated it, through Hushai's counsel, in order "to bring evil upon Absalom."

All this, beloved fellow-Christian, should teach us the wisdom of trusting the Lord even under the rod of His correction; judging ourselves, falling into His

loving hands, and leaving ourselves, character, nay circumstances, all with Him, remembering what is written, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due season."

H. H.

THE FIRST RESURRECTION.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.

Rev. xx. 4-6, and Luke xx. 27-38.

AS the resurrection is the foundation of faith, it is also the great object of our *hope*. The Apostle speaks of three things which especially characterise the Christian—"faith, hope, and love." *Faith* has reference to Christ on the cross, and in the presence of God, while *hope* has reference to Christ—the coming Christ in the glory. Paul argues in 1 Cor. xv. 14, preaching and faith are both in vain if Christ be not raised; and again, as to *hope* in Christ, then are we "of all men most miserable" (ver. 19); and again, if the dead rise not, let us pamper this poor body, relic of our old Adam standing, for to-morrow we die (as the brute—ver. 32).

Now observe that there are *two* great truths connected with resurrection—first, the *justification of the Church* (Rom. iv. 25), resurrection being the pledge of the acceptance of Christ's finished work; and second, the forfeiture of all our old standing in the flesh, "risen with Christ." Many admit the immortality of the soul, but deny the resurrection of the body; and why? Because resurrection of a body reduced to dust is a glory that must belong to God alone, where man's impotency is glaringly exposed. Immortality according to Plato and his school confers *some* dignity upon fallen man. Paul gives us a grand argument against the difficulties which many raise in 1 Cor. xv. 35, and following verses.

Compare what our Lord says of the resurrection in Luke xx. 34-38, with what the Spirit by the Apostle John says in Rev. xx. 4-6. These both speak of a distinctive resurrection. The Lord Jesus in Luke xx. declares some "shall be accounted worthy to obtain 'that AGE'" (the millennial age, or habitable world to come, of Heb. ii. 5). John, in Rev. xx. says, "Blessed and holy is he that hath PART in the first resurrection" (contrasted here with the PART of the "fearful and unbelieving," &c., of Rev. xxi. 8). Again, the Lord declares such alone to be the "children of God." John

adds a further blessing—"They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." Once more the Lord declares in Luke, "Neither can they die any more;" while John in Revelation repeats, "On such the second death hath no power."

Evidently, then, some will be raised at some future time after this, who are not the children of God; who will not be accounted worthy to obtain the millennial age, or, in other words, to reign as royal priests with Christ during the thousand years; who will have no part in the blessing of Rev. xx. 6; and upon whom (awful thought!) the second death will have power: for their PART will be to be raised in God's eternity, judged at the great white Throne, and consigned to a fixed condition of eternal judgment in the lake of fire, which is the second death (Rev. xxi. 8).

Thus we see in Luke xx., the Lord not only proves the broad fact of resurrection, and meets the heresies of the Sadducees both about this and the existence of angels, but He goes beyond this, for He rescues the doctrine from the vague and powerless way the covetous formal worldly Pharisees held it as a general resurrection of evil and good, instead of its being the hope of the promise made to Jewish fathers (Acts xxvi.), which made Abraham and the patriarchs strangers and pilgrims (Heb. xi. 8-10, 13-16, and 39, 40).

I could not at first understand verses 37, 38 (Luke xx). It was clear enough proof the soul was immortal and that there is no *annihilation*, but how could it prove the resurrection of the body? Look at Genesis xv. Here we find Abram receives the promise that he shall inherit the land. Has he inherited it yet? No; he is yet to inherit it personally, and to assure him he receives a sign. It is an unconditional promise, which is again repeated in chap. xvii. 7, 8. "I will give unto *thee*"—Abraham individually. When and how is this to be fulfilled? In the resurrection; and that is the reason God is not ashamed to be called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Jacob; otherwise, His faithfulness to His promise might be impeached.

Christ, who is the First-fruits has been raised; and Abraham, with those who sleep in Christ, shall be raised to reign over the land. So the resurrection was the hope of Israel, as it is of the Church; yet the hope of Israel was very different from our hope. Their hope was the hope of possessing the land in resurrection; our hope (as we are already by faith "risen with

Christ") is an *ascension*, a heavenly hope. Some of us will know *no resurrection*, yet we shall all—those who sleep, and those who are alive and remain—know what it is to ascend in a moment

Turn now to Rev. xx. 4. This has puzzled many; but I believe God is now going to open up this book as He has never done before. Mark the blessing with which the book opens and closes on those who read and keep the sayings of the book (ch. i. 3, and xxii. 7). Shall we lose these blessings? I have read such a title as "The Unveiling of the Revelation." Why, the word *Revelation* means *unveiling*! It is the simplest book in the world, if read aright. Why does Satan seek to obscure it? Just because his own final destruction and the final glory of Christ and the Church are there revealed.

Read, then, chap. xx. 4. John says—"I saw thrones, and they sat upon them." Who are upon these thrones? The number is not given, because it is never altered, the number being complete; but it is the *twenty-four elders*: spoken of as priests worshipping, in the fourth chapter, and as kings reigning, in the fifth chapter.* These elders are the believers of this dispensation. The number is always the same, because the Church is at this time complete. The rapture takes place between the third and fourth chapters, and all these other things spoken of are after that great event. That then is one party complete. Mark, they are sitting on thrones, therefore they are souls united to the body. It is the Church raised, changed, and glorified at Christ's coming.†

Now, observe, there is another party, for God will have fresh witnesses of His new dealings with the earth, after the Church, the heavenly witness of His grace, has been taken away. Then begins "the day of vengeance of our God," when the mourners (the oppressed remnant of Israel) will be comforted (Isa. lx. 2, and lxiii. 4), and their cruel Gentile oppressors burned up as stubble by the glory of the Lord's epiphany in judgment (Malachi iv). These new wit-

* Doubtless the number twenty-four has reference to the twenty-four courses into which the whole Aaronic Priesthood was divided by David, see 1 Chron. xxiv. 1-19.

† Note also that this resurrection company is seen in heaven around the throne, *before* the Lamb has taken the book and opened the seals. If the opening of the seals be the ushering in of "the great tribulation," then it is impossible to resist the conclusion that the "Royal Priesthood" are translated to heaven before the tribulation and before the manifestation of Antichrist.

nesses are in communion with God and His purposes. Identity of thought is communion—when I think as God thinks.

"I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God." Who are these? In the sixth chapter we read of the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held—"And they cried with a loud voice, saying, 'How long, O Lord?'" They are told to "rest yet a little while, until their fellow-servants and brethren should be killed as they were." Who are these under the altar? The souls of the Jewish martyrs of the early days of the anti-Christian persecution. They cannot be the Church, for the Church cannot pray for vengeance. It would falsify God's design. Our dispensation is that of love and grace, not vengeance.

But there is another party in chap. xx. 4. "*Those which*" (as it should read) had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands." Who are these? These are the "fellow servants" and "brethren" of chap. vi. 11—the last martyrs just before the millennium. The first martyrs suffered shortly after the rapture, and these last after the image of the Man of Sin, or the abomination of desolation, is set up in the rebuilt Jewish Temple, when the great tribulation has begun, and shortly before the appearing of the Son of Man in judgment to the earth. Those are the Jews who will not worship the beast or receive his mark, and who are therefore slain.

But observe, both these last groups are said to live and reign with Christ. Why is it said "they lived?" Because they are united to the body. In the sixth chapter they are still separate from their bodies; but now these bodies are raised. And, observe what is done with their cry for vengeance: it is taken and put in the vial along with God's own wrath, and poured out upon the earth.

But why is the account of the first resurrection put off so long? It is, that in the hour of their trial and persecution these martyrs may be comforted by the hope of reigning with Christ. Their bodies shall be raised just before His appearing in judgment to the world, as the dead in Christ shall be at His coming in grace, when the Old Testament saints are translated together with the Church, and they shall reign with Him and with us.

But, observe, it is one thing to be the bride of Christ, and another thing to reign with Him. The Church is the bride, and shall reign; but these suffering ones shall also reign. The saints of the millennial age shall not reign; they shall not suffer, and therefore shall not reign. But all those who are raised before the millennium, every saint, from the beginning of the world until then, shall reign with Christ. Blessed indeed are they. The first resurrection has then several acts; Christ the First-fruits has been raised; then the Church, together with the Old Testament saints, will be raised at His coming; and, lastly, all those who have testified for Him during the interval between His coming for the Church and His appearing in judgment. These last are raised just before the setting up of the millennial, or manifested Kingdom, established in power upon the earth, and shall reign in life by one, Christ Jesus, with the faithful of all preceding ages, and with the Church, the Bride and Body of the Lord Jesus Christ, who will pre-eminently behold, and share, and manifest His glory eternally.

Blessed hope, we shall reign with Him. How our ears should be opened to catch the first burst of the shout when the dead shall be raised, and those who are alive caught up. Then our jubilee trump shall sound, and "we shall be with Him, and shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is!"

THE PRAYER MEETING.

"Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be *hasty* to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few" (Ecc. v. 2).

IS there not a great danger of a "*gift in prayer*" becoming largely developed amongst us? By this I mean a long and fluent rehearsal of precious truths, well known to most, and certainly to God, who gave them all, accompanied with a painfully frequent reiteration of His name. Is not the time at our prayer-meetings largely occupied with the exercise of this *unscriptural gift*, often to the exclusion of real prayer.

Are there not increasing numbers amongst us who think they will be "heard for *much speaking*," in which they feel quite at home, instead of "*much prayer*," of which they may know but little?

We are not obliged to stay an hour and a half, or even an hour. Better far, simply and humbly present such requests as are laid upon our hearts, *with thanksgiving*, and retire, than offer such a vain substitute for prayer and supplication.

Prayer produces prayer, and one short, earnest cry awakens and encourages another; whereas the recapitulation, for some twenty minutes, of God's ways and dealings, well-nigh extinguishes the spirit altogether.

It would greatly help a united cry to the Lord, if any special subjects were made known to all at the commencement of the meeting, that all might *agree* about what they were going to ask. In this, as in everything else, God wants, and must have, reality; and *in proportion as this is wanting*, the prayer-meeting, however regularly and well-attended, cannot be acceptable to Him.

Moreover, it must be remembered that it is the fervent prayer of a *righteous* man that availeth much; and if one, walking in *unrighteousness*, with sin unconfessed, ventures to pray for others, *he will not be heard*. (Psalm lxxi. 18).

Surely, in the solemn attitude of drawing near to the very throne of God, we should avoid and shun everything that is not *simple* and *real*.

BREAD OF HEAVEN.

"**B**READ of Heaven! once more descending,
Come, my fainting soul to feed;
Health and life, together blending,
Meet in Thee—the Living Bread!
O! my Saviour,
Now Thy board of plenty spread.

While in faith Thy saints, attending,
Here Thy death's memorials take,
Angels, o'er the table bending,
Gaze—admire—but ne'er partake:
No such banquet
Sinless spirits ever make.

Angels' food! they taste—adoring—
Immortality's own tree:
Richer food I eat—imploing—
Feeding, O my God, on Thee.
'Bread of God,'
Nourish, strengthen, comfort me.

Though the fig tree may not blossom,
Nor the vine its cluster yield,
Nor the olive fill my bosom,
Nor the harvest crown my field—
Can I perish
With a Saviour's love revealed?

No! ah, no! avaunt! repining;
He is more than flock or herd:
'Midst all earthly stores declining,
Still my Saviour's voice is heard—
'I'll supply thee,
While depending on My Word."

FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.

CHAP. X.—DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT.

“When Israel was a child then I loved him, and called My Son *out of Egypt*” (Hosea xi. 1).

“Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world” (Gal. i. 4).

CLOSELY connected with the people's salvation from the destroying angel's sword was their separation and departure from the land of Egypt. The very same night on which the blood of the Paschal Lamb was sprinkled on their lintels and doorposts they turned their backs on Egypt, its people and its gods, and bade farewell to the scenes of their idolatry and slavery for ever. Every link that had bound them to these was snapped, and they went free to serve the living and true God.

How solemn and how real their departure from that doomed country must have been! At the dead hour of midnight, amid the shrieks of the Egyptians bewailing their firstborn dead, they silently hurried forth!

“Egypt was glad when they departed” (Ps. cv. 38), and Pharaoh urged them forth from among his people. Truly might they say, “By strength of hand the Lord brought us forth from Egypt, from the house of bondage” (Exod. xiii. 14); and He who led them out could never lead them back again.

The believer's separation from the world is closely linked with his salvation; and so we read of “Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from *this present evil world*, according to the will of God and our Father” (Gal. i. 3, 4). Blessedly true it is of all that believe, that their sins are forgiven and their judgment past, through the death of Jesus, but none the less true is it that the same blessed work has delivered them from the world. The cross of Christ is the door of escape from a guilty world, as well as the refuge for a guilty sinner, and by it the believer is separated from the world of the ungodly as well as from his sins.

But many do not see this, else they do not want to see it. Such boast in the Cross as their deliverance from wrath to come, but not their crucifixion to the world. They live at home in Egypt—the ungodly are their associates; and although they speak of being in heaven at last, they grasp the world in one hand, or to use a popular phrase, they try to “make the best of both worlds.” It is not “the will of God and our Father” that such should be; for on the separation of the be-

liever from the world He has spoken with a clearness none can mistake. What think you of such a verse as this, believer? “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever, therefore, will be a *friend of the world is the ENEMY OF GOD*” (James iv. 4).

That does not sound like “making the best of both worlds,” does it? Nor has any one who ever tried it found the game a gaining one, either for time or eternity. Remember Lot!

Learn then, young believer, from this part of Israel's history, the way of the Lord in separating His redeemed from this present evil world, and shrink not from making the line a clear one. Satan will hinder you if he possibly can, for he hates an out-and-out stand for Christ. This is seen in Pharaoh's four concessions. If he cannot detain you by worldly *pleasures*, it will suit his purpose quite as well to do it by worldly *religion*. If he can succeed in keeping you “sacrificing in the land,” that is, having a religion outwardly the same as the ungodly—worshipping at the same altar, sitting at the same communion-table—he won't mind much if you leave the dance, the concert, and the game. For worldly religion is the devil's grandest device for the damnation of sinners, and the entrapping of saints. It may be you do not believe this, for many are ready enough to declaim against the world, pure and simple, its wickedness and its pleasures, who are friendly enough with it in its religion and its hypocrisy. Strange that men are so slow to learn what is written on every page of history, either human or divine—I mean that *worldly religion* is a greater enemy to God, His people, and His truth, than worldly pleasures or open wickedness. *Who* hunted the Son of God, and sought to catch His words? Scribes and Pharisees, the religious leaders of that day! *Who* moved the crowd to demand Barabbas, and crucify Jesus? The chief priests and elders! *Who* condemned the Holy One for speaking blasphemy? The man who wore the golden plate with “Holiness to the Lord” inscribed upon his brow—Israel's High Priest! And in more recent days, the Smithfield fires, the rack, and the prison-cell, have all been superintended and gloated over, by men famous in what is called the “Christian world,” which, although it has adopted the title, is at heart the same world still, and will continue to be so to the end. Do not let appearances deceive you then, young believer. Turn your back on Egypt's altars

and its temples, as well as on its unvarnished wickedness, even as you are called to do by the Word of God (2 Tim. iii. 1-5).

“Redeemed of the Lord, we are heavenward bound,
We dare not rest on enchanted ground ;
For behind us is Satan’s black flag unfurl’d,
O’er a sin-bound race, in a death-doomed world—
And around us the devils jibe and jeer,
O’er the frantic souls that are perishing there.”

The *mixed multitude* may teach us another lesson (see Exod. xii. 38). If one trick fail, the devil will try another—for his devices are not one, but many. If he cannot detain some of God’s redeemed in Egypt, he will send Egyptians up to Canaan mixed up among them. And has he not succeeded? In the dead of night it would be a difficult thing to detect a few Egyptians among a band of some two millions of people, so they get mixed up among them. Probably this mixture consisted of the Egyptian friends of Israelitish families, for it would appear they had intermarried (see Lev. xxiv. 10), and what more natural than to accompany their friends? But they became a weakness and a curse to them. It was the “mixed multitude” who cried for flesh, and loathed the manna, and they led Israel to do the same (Num. xi. 4; xxi. 5). And so it ever is. During a time of soul-saving in a town, when believers are turning their backs on the world, and becoming “pilgrims to the better land,” Satan introduces his counterfeits, and sends them on along. Some follow for the loaves and the fishes, others from fear; others follow the crowd, and none more likely than the relations and friends of true believers, who have outwardly adopted the name of “Christian,” through their influence, but are at heart Egyptians. Such will only become a clog and a snare to the true believer; therefore let us watch the worldlings, who “unawares creep in” among the saints; sooner or later they will return to the country from whence they came, and their influence for evil is mighty.

“And they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment. And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required, and they spoiled the Egyptians” (Exod. xii. 36). Some have been puzzled with these verses, and an evil use has been made of them by others, to prove that it is a right thing to “fleece” the world, and take their goods and money to be used in the work of the Lord,

as these jewels evidently were in the building of the tabernacle, or more likely for the making of the golden calf (Exod. xxxii.) The words will bear no such meaning. “Borrow” and “lent” in this case only mean “asked” and “given;” and when they did ask, it was only their own hard earned wages for years of unpaid work in brickmaking. Hard up for proof men must surely be, when they need to resort to this to justify begging-sermons and religious raffles, or bazaars, to raise money to build magnificent temples, wherein man’s pride may figure, and his vanity be exhibited under the garb of religion. But their folly is becoming manifest to all. May God’s saints be kept from the spirit of such things, as well as from fellowship with them. To work to a worldly master and receive his wages, or to hire an ungodly servant and pay him for his work, is right; but to borrow from the world and not pay, or to go in debt with the world or any one else, is against the teaching of the Word of God (Rom. xiii. 7, 8; 2 Cor. viii. 21).

SANCTIFICATION.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY H. GROVES.

2 Peter i. 1-11.

THE first epistle of Peter seems to me to represent the groundwork of what we have in Christ, and the second epistle, the Spirit of God building up the superstructure. We look at the cross of Christ, and we are able to say, “Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” A great many of the difficulties which often occur in connection with the subject of holiness, arise from the fact that they do not see that it is, first, IN Christ, and, second, that it is BY the Holy Ghost. Our sanctification in Christ is secure, perfect, and complete—to which we can add nothing, and from which we cannot take.

The altar, in connection with the tabernacle in the wilderness as to its measurement, was foursquare; but when we come to the laver there is not any measurement given; because the altar is Christ’s infinite measure given to every child of God. Every individual Christian as he stands before God in Christ, stands perfect in holiness. Have we laid hold on that? But let us remember that God does not stop there. We divorce in our theology what God has joined together, namely, What I am absolutely in

Christ, and what I have relatively in the power of the Holy Ghost. The laver was filled. You and I can easily tell why it is we know so little of the power of God. Our vessels are not full. God can fill our vessels, whether it be a thimbleful or ocean large. "He giveth not the Spirit by measure." He giveth Christ by measure—a whole Christ.

When the work of the Holy Ghost is spoken of, it is a work not apart from us but with us. I pray God that as we consider the personal sanctification of the child of God by the Holy Ghost, we may have our conscience exercised before God, and read in our own life the reason we know so little of the power of God. We can talk *about* Christ, and a very babe born yesterday can do so also. But can we talk of Christ in us by the power of the Holy Ghost? Those who are familiar with the epistle to the Ephesians, will remember that the first prayer of the apostle in the first chapter has to do with what we have and what we are in Christ. He prays that we might know the immensity of our position in Christ; but the prayer in the third chapter is, that the condition of the soul would grow with the knowledge of our position. If position and condition do not agree, woe unto us. The power of the Holy Ghost is inworking in the believer; hence the exhortation, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Because, in proportion as the Spirit is grieved, the power of the Holy Ghost is lost. The Lord says to Israel, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." And He says to us, "Be filled with the Spirit." How filled? Running over with Christ! Let us remember, first of all, that we are absolutely holy, because we are made partakers of the divine nature; and that with Paul we can say, "I am crucified with Christ;" not I was, but "I am." The work of Christ on the cross is past—finished once for all; and we can neither add to it nor take from it. But the work of the Holy Ghost is past and present; and we may hinder or frustrate that work. If I am asked, What measure do you give to the operation of the Holy Ghost? An infinite measure.

Turn now to 2 Peter 1st chap. verse 3-11: "According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness. (4th verse) Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature," &c. Ponder these words,

"divine power," and "divine nature." Divine nature secured by my union with Christ. (5th verse), "And beside this, giving all diligence." "All diligence!" What does it mean? Life-long. If a man wants to make money, he gives his time, and strength, and energy, and his whole mind to acquire it. "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." If you want to know the power of the divine life in your soul, you must be as really in earnest as the worldly man is in his business. There is a saying, "Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves." And if the Christian would be careful about small matters in spiritual things, he would attain to greater things. You will hear some people say, "O, it is only a small matter." If you and I only knew how much the experience of the power of God rests on attention to small things in our spiritual experience, we would be more watchful of them. How often one small sin committed puts the extinguisher on the testimony of God's children?

"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith." That is to say, "you supplying on your part," or "you giving on your part all diligence." Of ourselves we can do nothing, for we are poor, weak and helpless, but let us go in with our helplessness to God, and ask His help. "Add to your faith virtue." That is, courage or obedience—that courage which obeys. You and I are prone to be satisfied with the first step in the divine life, and we wonder why it is that we are not advancing. Have you been adding to your faith? "And to virtue knowledge." Is knowledge gotten when we are fast asleep? Ask the student at the college if he has dreamed his knowledge into himself. If you search the Word of God on your knees you will know what it is to grow in knowledge. Obedience first, and knowledge next. We want the knowledge first. "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge," &c. "Add to your knowledge temperance." Self-control. I should hold my temper, my lips, my hands, my feet, in subjection to my Lord—that is self-control. All under the mighty control of God's Spirit. How many of us give the reins to the devil? God give us grace to give the reins into the hands of our Lord. If we do not give them He will not take them by force. We must give them to Him willingly. (8th verse) "For if these things be in you, and abound," &c. Mark the "ifs." Ponder over John's gospel,

15th chapter, and remember the "ifs" there. "If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." This is altogether experimental and subjective. What I do dread is the way in which I see the objective and subjective divorced. We are transformed from glory to glory by the Spirit of the living God as by faith we behold Christ. "Neither barren nor unfruitful." The reason we are barren and unfruitful is, that we have failed to give all diligence to add to our faith. "But he that lacketh these things is blind," &c. Is there any blind Christian whose eyes cannot see the glory—who cannot see Christ? We may get ourselves into this condition. "Blind, and cannot see a long way off." O to see what is a long way off! To behold the glory as Paul! "We see Jesus." "And hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." O that we would gird up the loins of our mind! "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." I have known Christians make their calling and election sure by texts of Scripture. If we want to make our calling and election sure, it is by having that Scripture inwrought in our own soul—not by separating what I have in Christ from what the Holy Ghost is working in me. "If ye do these things ye shall never fall." Backsliding begins by not being satisfied with Christ.

Here is what appears to me to be the line of truth into which the Spirit of God, through Peter, would direct our heart: first seeing what we have in Christ, and obeying Him through the inworking of His Spirit. Now may the Spirit of God in us say Amen to everything which we see in Christ on the cross for us.

DUTIES are ours; events are God's. This removes an infinite burden from the shoulders of a miserable, tempted, dying creature. On this consideration only can he securely lay down his head and close his eyes.

A SOUND head, a simple heart, and a spirit dependent on Christ, will suffice to conduct us in every variety of circumstances.

WHEN we grieve our Guide through the wilderness, the Holy Spirit, He is disturbed, as He was by Israel of old; but we should be thankful that He loves us so much as to be grieved.

WHAT IS GOD DOING?

IT is one peculiar privilege of the disciples of Christ to be treated as His friends, and therefore to know what God is doing.

It may tend to help us in understanding "the thoughts" and "ways" of God, if we consider the peculiar character of the dispensation under which we live.

Its characteristic blessings are *personal, spiritual, and heavenly*. The thoughts of the immediate disciples of the Lord Jesus Himself were turning to other blessings. This was apparent even after the Lord's resurrection, when they asked Him, "Lord; wilt thou at this time restore *again* the kingdom to Israel?" His reply showed them that they would not be able to enter into the thoughts and ways of God, until the promise of the Father, the Holy Ghost the Comforter, came upon them.

When He did come, Peter and his fellow-apostles stood forth to the *nation* of Israel as the witnesses of the exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of God; they thus preached "the Gospel to them *with* the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." Their testimony, as the Lord's own testimony had been, was *nationally* rejected by Israel, but was effectual in calling out a remnant, whose portion was union with the risen, ascended, and glorified Jesus.

Upon Israel's national rejection of the testimony of the apostles and resistance to the Holy Ghost, which reached its height in the martyrdom of Stephen, Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, is called. But before he exercises his distinctive ministry, Peter, the apostle of the circumcision, is sent by means of a vision from Joppa to Cesarea, to tell Cornelius, a Roman soldier, words whereby he and his household should be saved. And he vindicates what he did against the accusations of his brethren of the circumcision by asserting, "As I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. . . . Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as He did unto us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I, that I could withstand God." Thus were Jews and Gentiles baptized by the one Spirit into one body (1 Cor. xii. 13), of which Jesus is the glorified Head.

This was what God was then doing, and has been doing ever since. But it was hard for those whose minds had been otherwise trained to fall at once into

God's thoughts and ways. A new era succeeds. The Holy Ghost takes His place as the sovereign Agent in this dispensation, acting from Antioch instead of Jerusalem, selecting special ministers for a special work: "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." And thus did He send forth His servants on the first mission to the Gentiles. They went into synagogues of the Jews first and preached to them Jesus: but when the Jews rejected their testimony, they "turned to the Gentiles." And from that time the Jews became the bitterest opponents of the apostles.

After this a new difficulty arises from *believing* Jews. "Certain men (Acts xv.) came down from Judea and taught the brethren, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." This question led to the council of Jerusalem. In that council we find the charter of our spiritual liberty. The apostle James shows that the work which God is now doing is "taking out from among the Gentiles a people for His name;" and then he shows the harmony of this work of God with the tenor of ancient prophecy. "The Pharisees which believed" regarded the coming in of the Gentiles from their own point of view, namely, Israel restored to divine favour, and the nations blessed under them. See Isa. ii. 2-5. But it was not now God's "time" and "season" for this. He was doing the very reverse, bringing vengeance on Israel (Luke xxi. 22), giving up the house called by His name to desolation, and scattering Israel as "wanderers among the nations." In addition to this, visiting them as a nation with judicial blindness "unto this day" (Rom. xi. 8).

So long as God's wrath rests on Israel nationally, God is visiting "the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name." God is not now associating His name with any *nation*, or *city*, or *place*. The result of what He is now doing is seen in Rev. v. 9, namely, a *heavenly* people nearer the throne than un-fallen angels, singing the new song, "Thou art worthy; for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." And it is worthy of remark that this election out of the nations is in the Revelation contrasted with "the nations" and "tongues" collectively, which are found both under the power of the beast (Rev. xiii. 7), and under the influence of the harlot (xvii).

The apostle James harmonizes God's present work among the Gentiles with the faithfulness of His promises to Israel, "And to this agree the words of the prophets." He is not now showing the fulfilment of the prophecies, but how that which God is now doing falls in with "the ways of God" as previously announced. "After this," or rather "after these things, I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down, that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom My name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth *all these things*. Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." And the work which God is now doing must be completed ere the thought of the believing Pharisees in the restoration of the kingdom to Israel would be acted on.

It is of importance to recognize the purely elective character of the present dispensation, as well as how pre-eminently the present is the dispensation of the Spirit. The future Israel will assuredly be blessed with spiritual blessings, but they will also have from God temporal and national blessings; but the blessings of the Gentile election are exclusively spiritual, heavenly, and eternal. We are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ;" hence tribulation is our portion in the world.

The Holy Ghost is not only the sovereign orderer of the dispensation, but the characteristic sins of the dispensation are sins against the Holy Ghost; such as "resisting the Holy Ghost" (Acts vii. 51), as all do now who "obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ;"—"doing despite to the Spirit of grace" (Heb. x. 26)—the sin of Christendom in having turned away from worship in the Spirit to ordinances and a human priesthood—"quenching the Spirit" (1 Thess. v. 19),—"grieving the Holy Spirit of God" (Ephes. iv. 3). For this sin how many of the children of God are now bowing the knee in humiliation and confession?

In the exercise of His sovereignty, the Holy Ghost raised up Luther, to retrieve to us the blessed truth of justification by faith alone in Christ, and not by any inherent righteousness in us. Subsequently, in an age of cold formality and barren orthodoxy, He raised up Whitfield and Wesley, to awaken men from their deathly slumber, by the cry, "Ye must be born again." And what is the Holy Ghost doing in our days? Is He not asserting His sovereignty in a very marked manner? Working in many instances without any

apparent means; in some by agencies not accredited by men; in others by the ordinary ministry; but in all instances so working as to bring into experimental harmony the two really inseparable truths of regeneration and justification. See John iii. The Holy Ghost has of late so wrought conviction of sin on the souls of sinners, that unless Jesus, whom He glorifies, be presented to them, in all the completeness of His salvation, their burden would be intolerable. Surely the Holy Ghost is now casting down human theories, and showing that faith in the finished work of Christ must needs be assurance.

But the Holy Ghost is no less remarkably working in the minds of Christians, by leading them to cease from their own multiplied agencies and to wait upon God in prayer. "Praying . . . in the Spirit," is part of our Christian armour, not only defensive but also aggressive in its character (Ephes. vi. 18, 19). We own the guidance of the Holy Ghost in preaching, that the doctrine preached may be according to "the Word," but His guidance is equally needed that we may ask "according to the will of God." "Building up ourselves on our most holy faith, *praying in the Holy Ghost.*" We have to watch against our own thoughts in prayer; as we learn from Abraham, who desired in his prayer that Ishmael might be blessed, when the thoughts of God were upon Isaac (Gen. xvii. 18). We need intelligent as well as earnest prayer; prayer in *the Spirit*, in the sphere in which He is now acting. But we need also seriousness, as those who are not only alive to the present mercy of God, so as to abound with praise and thanksgiving, but as those also who are alive to the exceeding "peril" of these

last days, and to the peculiar snare and danger of worldly Christianity.

"The end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore *sober*, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves." "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another as good stewards of *the manifold* grace of God. . . . That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

CHRIST IN THE MIDST OF THE LIGHT-BEARERS.

(Revelation i. 10-16).

ON earth He needs a candlestick—a light; not so in heaven; there is no need of a candlestick there; no candle there to give light, "for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

But on earth He needs light-bearers, and therefore the character of candlesticks is given to the seven churches to be the "light of the world;" they are lighted from Heaven to give light on the earth, in the dark places below; to bear testimony to Christ, while He is away in heaven, hid in God. And it is to test these light-bearers that Christ walks as the Son of Man amidst the candlesticks.

It is true that our life is hid with Christ in God; but while walking on the earth, we are to shine as lights in the world—the displayers of what Heaven can produce; to be living in heaven while walking on the earth—as Jesus spoke of Himself when on the earth: "the Son of Man which is in heaven."

SPECIAL NOTICE TO OUR READERS.

It is our intention in future to devote a page or so of the "Northern Witness" to the answering of Questions.

We therefore invite our Readers to send us written Questions, which the Editor with the help of others will endeavour to reply to from Scripture.

As the only object we have in view is to glorify God in the building up of His people, we shall not insert either Questions or Answers that do not appear to us to be to edification.

The Prayers of the Lord's people are earnestly desired for wisdom and guidance concerning this special service, and also for blessing upon the truth circulated by means of the "Northern Witness."

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THE NORTHERN WITNESS

LONDON

JAMES E. HAWKINS,
12 Paternoster Sq., E.C.,
and 36 Baker Street, W.

FEBRUARY,
1880.

GLASGOW

GEO. TURNER & Co.,
40 Sauchiehall Street.

NOTES ON THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

By W. LINCOLN.

CONCLUSION—FROM CHAP. viii. 5 TO THE END.

THE general argument of this exquisite and inspired ode in its two great parts seems to be completed at chap. viii. 4. The doctrinal basis on which the rest of the Song is founded had been succinctly set forth, albeit in language oftimes of metaphor and of type in Part I., from chap. i. 1 to ii. 7. Then had followed other dialogues between the Bridegroom and Bride, relative to (1) her coming *out* to Him; to (2) her coming *with* Him from borderland; to (3) the opening of her heart wholly unto Him; and (lastly) to her disappearance to be with Him. Each of the two several parts or divisions of the Song was found to be thus comprised in four pieces; and whilst the doctrine in Part I. is stated but briefly, the corresponding practice required by Him of her is opened out in full detail; and then the climax is reached when at length she is finally and for ever with Himself.

These other verses which remain to be considered appear to be supplemental in their character. They are commenced by the repetition of the surprise felt by her old companions at the amazing grace with which she had been distinguished. For compare chap. vi. 13 with viii. 5, and then these closing verses of the Song may be properly regarded in the following manner:—First, we have a very loving retrospect by the Lord Himself of His past dealings with her who is now His acknowledged Bride; secondly, we have a glance or two at the future salvation of Gentiles;

and then, lastly, we have what should be the Bride's present earnest prayer to Him in view of that happy morn.

In the first place, we have a gracious retrospect by the Bridegroom of His way of obtaining and winning His Bride. Says He, "I raised thee up under the apple tree." This is undoubtedly in allusion to the doctrine enshrined in chap. ii. 3, when she owns what it was in Him which first won her admiration; and no believer can be in any doubt as to what feature in Christ this refers to—Christ crucified for sinners. The Son of God giving up Himself on the cross is certainly the first view with which grace charms us. Then had she prayed to be comforted with apples ever and anon from this wondrous life-giving and life-reviving Apple tree. Thus had she grown in the knowledge and appreciation of His dying love. There, her mother—which particular term in our case we may refer to the Church, to the believers and preachers who had preceded us—there had she been begotten; there born again.

"There is life in a look to the Crucified One."

And from the first moment of her perception of His love, He had been jealous of aught in her heart that interfered with its whole and entire surrender by her unto Him. As the High Priest of Israel carried the names of each one of the twelve tribes engraved upon the onyx stones on his shoulder, and also upon the breastplate on his heart, figuring thereby the affection and constancy of Him who is Saviour and High Priest of His people, so does He expect that this twofold display of His love

be reciprocated in the only way in which this is possible unto us. That is to say, we are to bear as if upon our shoulders the cross after Him; and we likewise, whilst content to suffer for His name, must see that our hearts' affections are set upon Himself. Accordingly, He specifies five proofs of love—not of His love, nor yet of hers, but of love itself* in the abstract, whether of Him or of her—and in these ways she is incited to trace the reality and vastness of His love towards her; and thus likewise is she gently bid to test her own towards Him. For we love Him because He first loved us. The sentiment couched in this enumeration of these five† tests of love of His and of her own reminds one of that Scripture, "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit," for we are the Bride of Him whose name is—the Lamb!

In the second place follows naturally, and in exquisite order if looked at spiritually, an allusion to the future calling of the Gentiles; for now, rendered full of joy herself in the presence of her much-loved Lord, she begins to speak in the behalf of others. It is a remarkable coincidence in the New Testament with the line of thought connecting these verses here, that when the Church is beheld, as in Rev. v., as being at length in glory with the Lord, and as bowing in worship before Him, she is seen in her representative character by the twenty-four elders, who not only have harps to praise withal, but also vials containing the prayers of the Jewish remnant who are destined to go through the great tribulation.‡ Now that it is the Gentile world and not the ten tribes, as some suppose, which is glanced at here under the figure of the little sister appears evident from the following considerations:—It is the usual way of the Spirit to point onwards to some further action of God near the close of a given book of Scripture. Again, in the second parable that follows, Israel is compared to a vine, but silence is ominously observed as to the mass of the nation bearing any fruit. Then Christendom, according to Romans xi., succeeds morally to

* Under the third test of love it is declared that the coals thereof are coals of fire—a flame of *JAH*. This word Jah is very important here, for it contains a reply to the objection that the Divine name is not found in this Song. It is found in the Hebrew of chap. viii. 6.

† Centuries ago the Calvinistic controversy used to be termed "quinquarticular," or five-pointed. Here is another such five-pointed controversy which the backslider in heart would do well to have with himself.

‡ See my "Lectures on the Revelation," on chap. viii., at vol. i., p. 151.

the place from which Israel is temporarily removed. Thirdly, this little sister has no breasts—in other words, is too young to be marriageable; for the time for salvation to be preached unto the Gentiles had not then arrived. And lastly, this language "little sister" is not suitable to be applied to the ten tribes. It finds rather a readier parallel in the "younger son" of Luke xv.

But now, in the course of the Bride's reference here to the Gentiles, she utters two parables. The former, about the wall and the door, refers to separation from the world for Him, together with the mode of admission of any one out of it unto the privileges of those within. Here compare Isaiah xxvi. 1 and lx. 18. In each of these passages salvation itself is compared to a wall, and that because salvation is itself separation. Then the silver turret upon the wall denotes that that salvation is most costly, for it is through redemption by the blood of Christ, and is of eternal efficacy. In the Bride's personal application of this salvation to herself, in verse 10, it should be carefully observed that there is no hesitation in her style, nor doubting as to His grace. "I am saved," is virtually her language. He says that I am saved, therefore I am saved, and I have his favour. Yea, though she be to outward appearance a wall in the account of others, internally, and in His eyes, she is a Temple and a Bride.

Her second parable is of a vineyard. This again follows most aptly, for after we have obtained the knowledge of salvation in the remission of our sins, by the costly way of the blood-shedding of the Son of God, then clearly it is our part that we should go and bring forth fruit, and that our fruit should remain. The rent of the vineyard is identical with the sum named in Isaiah vii. 23. Though it is the Jewish Bride who is primarily the speaker in verse 12, still we shall do well to bear in mind that if we who have believed in His love say, "My Beloved is mine," we should ever be careful to add, "My vineyard is mine." Let us, therefore, see to it that we each of us know our own work and do it, and keep patiently at it, as before Him. So will Christ have His joy in us, and we, the keepers of the vineyard, shall have each our own joy likewise. And here contrast how changed her language is here from what it had been in chap. i. 6. We who keep the vineyard are to have a double-tenth; but Christ, as Benjamin, "Son of the Right

Hand," must have a portion five times greater. For He is worthy!

Thirdly, the entire Song closes, as similarly ends the book of the Revelation, with which in many respects, as was shown in the opening remarks on chap. i., there is much affinity of sentiment. Until He comes to take her to Himself, she asks that she may ever hear His voice. Probably verse 13 is still the Bride's utterance, from the fact that the word translated "companions" is of the masculine gender in the Hebrew. Compare the word in Rev. xxii. 17, "him that heareth;" for the Bride and each several believer is, during the whole period of sojourn here, to have the ear open to listen to His Word, and to catch the first sound of His footfall, and the first note of His arch-angelic signal, (Luke xii. 36, 37.) Then in verse 14, as in the book of Revelation, the whole is wound up with the prayer that He will speed His return. So may this prayer ever be escaping from our hearts, until that moment shall have arrived, when we shall no longer have occasion to breathe it.

[THE END.]

CHARITY.*

"And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness" (Col. iii. 14).

THE merely natural human emotion called "love" and the benevolence known as "charity" are both as different from Divine love, or charity, as darkness is from light.

The fountainhead of love, in its highest and truest and Scriptural sense, is God Himself. "God is love!"

In heathen lands nearly all idolaters recognize the existence of a Supreme Being. For such a Being many are the names they have coined; and most of their idols are in some way or other supposed to represent some aspect of His character. The altar at Athens to "The Unknown God," is an instance of this belief.

But in all the names and representations of Deity that have been invented, and they are legion, no such thought is found as that which it is our holy and blessed privilege to know—"God is love."

The highest approach to truth in heathen ideas is

* The Greek word rendered "charity" is, in the majority of passages where it occurs, translated "love." This promiscuous use of two English words to express one word in the original has possibly tended to obscure the sense.

such a name for the unseen God as Wisdom or Power; but by far the majority of names and representations of Deity embody prominently and unmistakably the idea of CRUELTY. Deceit, pride, revenge, licentiousness, are common attributes of heathen deities, but combined with all and almost invariably is CRUELTY.

Is not this the developed and intensified poison of Satan's lie? It is the deepest thought of the carnal mind, and yet the most utterly false. It is the same as in the parable: "I feared Thee, because thou art an austere man." How different the thought of God: "There is forgiveness with Thee, that thou mayest be feared," Ps. cxxx. 4.

The manifestation of this love, by which God would commend Himself to all mankind, is the gift of His Son. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins," 1 John iv. 9, 10.

God has thus proved that His love is no mere sentiment. It has found its way, at infinite cost, down to the depths of guilt and misery into which sin has plunged humanity, nor will it rest till it has brought its object up to the fulness of joy that is in His presence, and made them partakers of His own blessedness.

And this is one of the essential characteristics of Divine love—it is pre-eminently operative. It cannot rest; it must work. It cannot be pent up; it must find outflow. It cannot be content unless it finds an object upon which to bestow itself. Hence it is written, "Whoso hath this world's goods and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" He may have the profession of love; he may have love to those that love him; he may not be destitute of natural affection; but the *love of God* dwelleth not in him.

Again, Divine love always seeks the blessing of its object. Human love is commonly indifferent as to this. It seeks rather to please, to gratify, and to enjoy its object.

But the love of God cannot be content with pleasing, or gratifying, or indulging; it looks deeper, and desires to bless.

This is beautifully illustrated in Lev. xix. 17.

“Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

Such was the rebuke of Christ to Peter; “Get thee behind Me, Satan.” His was the “smiting” that was a “kindness” and the “reproof” that is like an “excellent oil,” Ps. cxli. 5. How He bound their hearts around Himself whilst He dealt in faithfulness with their faults! His was indeed “the love of God.” To bless was His purpose rather than to please. And still such is His way in dealing with His people. The time will come when He will gratify every desire of His saints as well as enjoy them Himself; but meantime other ends have to be served, blessing is to be bestowed in a different form, “As many as I love I rebuke and chasten.” “Nourish and cherish” He does, “sanctify and cleanse” He must, though the golden girdle bound about the breasts tells how in so doing meanwhile the tender affections of His heart are kept in. See Rev. i. 13; iii. 19.

It is one of the world’s sayings that “love is blind.” Not so Divine love. It is quick and jealous in discerning a stain, but it sets itself to cleanse, and to hide the evil, and not to expose it. “Charity shall cover the multitude of sins,” 1 Pet. iv. 8. Ham looked upon his father’s shame and spake of it, and the curse of Noah is upon his offspring for ever; but love “went backward” and covered the old man’s nakedness, Gen. ix. 20-23.

Whilst “God is love” it is also written that “God is light.” In Him holiness and love are inseparably united. Consistently with this the character of God, the love which He bears to a rebel world is manifested through Christ Jesus, and on the ground of His death, or blood-shedding, as the adequate satisfaction of every claim that law and justice could bring against the sinner. Herein He hath abounded toward us “in all wisdom and prudence,” Eph. i. 8. Whilst pouring out upon rebel sinners the riches of His grace, every interest involved has been duly considered—righteousness has been established, at the same time that love has been gratified.

So also in the life and ways of the Man Christ Jesus. Every step, every word, every look, every thought, was love and only love; yet never at any time was love allowed to compromise truth and righteousness.

It was love that detected and denounced the hypocrisy and rebuked the pride and vanity of the world. And it was love that chided the disciples for their “little faith,” and upbraided them for their hardness of heart, and humbled them by setting a little child in their midst.

And such is ever the character of Divine love, whether it be traced in the ways of God, or in the life of Christ, or reflected again in the saints. “This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments,” 1 John v. 3.

The danger to which the believer is ever exposed is to regard truth and love as opposed to each other, rather than as the two sides of the arch of grace. Instead of “speaking the truth in love,” Eph. iv. 15, and loving only “in the truth” and “for the truth’s sake,” 2 John i. 2, one regards TRUTH as his mission, and he will speak it regardless of the way and the spirit in which he speaks it, regardless as to whether it edifies or irritates, indifferent as to whether it attracts or repels; forgetting that the very same truth, mingled with grace and spoken in tones of love, might win its way and insinuate itself into the heart, that otherwise rebels against it. Let those who glory in themselves as martyrs for truth beware lest they be only martyrs for lack of the love of God and the grace of Christ!

Another regards himself as the apostle of love. He would not touch upon a subject of controversy in case he should hurt the feelings of his brethren. He will consent to be tongue-tied on truths and doctrines precious to his own soul, lest it should seem to be a breach of love to proclaim them and contend for them amongst those who are blind to them. He will suffer wrong without rebuking it, will tolerate evil doctrine in the assembly without judging it, will thus contravene the explicit instructions of the Word of God because he has never apprehended that truth and obedience are essentials of Divine love.

“Charity suffereth long and is kind;” nevertheless, charity “rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth,” 1 Cor. xiii. 6. There is a thing called “charity” which is preparing the way for Antichrist. It is that which tolerates all doctrines and all opinions, if only the authority of the Lord Jesus be set aside and His Word ignored.

Antichrist will find room in his theology for both Judaism and Christianity. It will be inclusive of every sect, but it will exclude the “Word of God and

the Testimony of Jesus ; "charity" will be the cry, but infidel despotism will be the issue.

It is in immediate connection with the exhortation, "love one another with a pure heart fervently," that the injunction is found as to "laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings," 1 Pet. i. 22, and ii. 1.

What a contrast there is between the bold, honest, straightforward faithfulness of Divine love, and the dissimulation that is sweet and pleasant before faces, but scruples not to speak evil behind backs. Oh, if there be envy and evil-speaking indulged, call not the smooth exterior *love* but *hatred*. The severe judgment, the bitter reproach, the scornful laugh, the imputation of the worst conceivable motive, so often indulged in by those who glory in their orthodoxy and knowledge of truth—these are the things that alienate and divide, and by which many are defiled.

But let the truth be held in love and acted on in love ; let love be without dissimulation ; let fervent charity as the bond of perfectness be above and around all thoughts, all words, all actions ; let the intercourse be in love, and the ministry in love, and the testimony in love ; then will such a spectacle be seen as shall win the saints from error, and attract both saints and sinners to Christ.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." So spake the Lord. But what have all men seen ? Sectarian bitterness, personal animosities, the biting and devouring, the judging and setting at nought one of another, and the very contention for liberality, toleration, and charity, often the most bitter, intolerant and uncharitable of all !

Reformation cannot be accomplished otherwise than as individuals. Individual self-judgment, for the lack of this the cardinal grace of Christianity, the first of the Spirit's fruits, the self-proving evidence of discipleship, and the bond of perfectness, will be the beginning of better things.

"Love is of God," 1 John. iv. 7. There is no other source of supply but God Himself. It is not a plant of nature's soil ; by the grace of God alone, and by the Holy Spirit's power can it be produced in the soul.

Knowledge is to be desired, gifts are to be coveted, but nothing is so like to God Himself, or possesses such value in His sight, as LOVE.

J. R. C.

REPENTANCE :

WHAT IT IS NOT, AND WHAT IT IS.

IT is most important to have correct thoughts of the scriptural meaning of "Repentance," seeing that the Lord Jesus has declared, "Except ye *repent* ye shall all likewise perish," Luke xiii. 8. If salvation or damnation hinge on it, the subject must be of the greatest moment. In Mark i. 15, we find the Lord urging His hearers to "*Repent*, and believe the gospel ;" and after His resurrection He charges His apostles that "*Repentance* and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations," Luke xxiv. 47. In Acts iii. 19, Peter, in accusing the Jews of murdering the Lord Jesus, pressed them to "*Repent* and be converted ;" while Paul, on Mar's Hill, distinctly asserts that God "now *commandeth all men everywhere to repent*," Acts xvii. 30.

Many of God's dear children have been deterred from examining the subject by the diversity of thought which exists among Christians as to what "repentance" really is. This fact, instead of hindering, ought to stimulate us to more patient and prayerful study of the Scriptures, that the Lord's mind should be obtained on it. Let us, first of all, consider

WHAT REPENTANCE IS NOT.

(1). *Repentance is NOT sorrow for sin.* This assertion may startle some, but I feel perfectly satisfied that the scriptural idea of "repentance" is not, as is commonly supposed, sorrow for sin. In saying that repentance is not sorrow for sin, I do not mean that a sinner, when he repents, will not be grieved and humbled for his sin. A sinner trample under foot the blood of the Son of God, and not mourn ! Impossible ! No one has ever yet repented toward God, without being sorry for his sin ; but true, godly sorrow always follows—never precedes—repentance. Before he repents, the sinner is doubtless sorry at the *consequences* of his sin—not because of the dishonour done to God, but because of the harm done to himself.

In confirmation of the statement that repentance is not sorrow for sin, turn to 2 Cor. vii. 10 : "FOR GODLY SORROW WORKETH REPENTANCE to salvation not to be repented of ; but THE SORROW OF THE WORLD WORKETH DEATH." In the first clause of the verse two things are spoken of—"godly sorrow," and "repentance." The one is said to work, or produce, the other "Godly

sorrow" must therefore be different from "repentance," as the one is represented as the *cause*, and the other, the *effect*.

Whatever, therefore, repentance is, it cannot mean godly sorrow. The producer and the thing produced cannot be the same. Gas produces heat, but heat is surely different from gas; poison produces death, but surely death is different from poison. If repentance meant "godly sorrow," we would have had the apostle writing, "Godly sorrow worketh godly sorrow," which would be meaningless.

In the latter clause of the verse, Paul says, "But the sorrow of the world worketh death." "Godly sorrow" is contrasted with "the sorrow of the world." The one is said to produce repentance, and the other death. But if repentance were "the sorrow of the world," the apostle's argument would then be, "Godly sorrow produceth the sorrow of the world," which would be contradictory. Besides, a man of the world—that is, an unconverted man—cannot have "godly sorrow," or sorrow according to the will of God; "They that are in the flesh cannot please God," Rom. viii. 5. "Godly sorrow" must be the sorrow for sin that a saved man feels; while "the sorrow of the world" which "worketh death" is the sorrow of those who are unsaved. "Repentance," according to this Scripture, then, cannot mean sorrow for sin.

In the ninth verse of the same chapter, the apostle writes: "Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye SORROWED TO REPENTANCE." If repentance meant sorrow the verse would read thus: "Ye sorrowed to sorrow."

It is evident that the sorrow *led to* repentance, and no one needs to be told that the leader and the thing led to are necessarily different things. Slothfulness leads to poverty, but poverty surely is different from slothfulness.

Heb. xii. 17—"For ye know how that afterward when he (Esau) would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." It seems clear that "repentance" here cannot possibly mean sorrow. If it meant sorrow, the Scripture would have read, "He found no place of sorrow (no way of being sorry), though he sought it carefully with tears." This, however, would have been self-contradictory, for weeping is the *outward* indication of the *inward* grief.

REPENTANCE IS NOT HATRED OF SIN AND DETERMINATION TO FORSAKE IT.

Unsaved men and women must oftentimes be perplexed and bewildered at the advice given by their spiritual instructors, to "hate" and "forsake sin," "submit to God," and "give up" this, that, and the other thing, *in order to be saved*. Such teachers seem to forget, or ignore the truth, that a man must *first* be rescued from the guilt and dominion of sin before he can renounce it; that he must *first* be justified before he can be sanctified; that he must *first* receive Christ before he can give up that which his nature loves and delights in. Of what use is it to urge upon unconverted men to hate or forsake sin, when every hour of every day of their lives, they are living in rebellion against the Almighty. Go where they may, do what they may, profess what they may, they are calling the living God a liar, 1 John v. 10, trampling under foot the blood of His Son, and doing despite to the Spirit of grace. Heb. x. 29.

WHAT REPENTANCE IS.

The Greek word *metanoia*, which in the New Testament is translated by the English word "repentance," means literally, "after-thought," from *meta*, "after" and *noia*, "thought;" and as *after-thought* oftentimes results in a CHANGE OF MIND, the word came to have that as its ordinary meaning.

In proof of this turn again to Heb. xii. 16, 17, "Esau, for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. Ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for *he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.*" Esau sought to obtain a *change of mind*, not in himself, but in his father, Isaac. Jacob, by guile, had obtained his father's blessing. Esau earnestly sought to get his father to change his mind, and recall the blessing and give it to him; but Isaac was immoveable, and said, "I have blessed him: yea, and he shall be blessed." It is clearly evident, therefore, that the repentance which Esau sought with tears, was a *change in his father's mind*.

"Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance," 2 Cor. vii. 9. The Christians at Corinth had been made sorry by Paul's first epistle, reproving them for inconsistencies of conduct and character. The letter had the desired effect, and they began at once to remedy the evils. They felt deeply humbled and grieved at their conduct,

and the apostle says, "I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance"—that ye sorrowed to such a change of mind as has produced such results. "For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves," Verse 11. Their sorrow manifested itself first in a *change of mind* (which is repentance), and then in a change of conduct, which is the legitimate fruit of their repentance. In exact accordance with this view of the meaning of repentance is the parable in Matt. xxi. 28, &c. The disobedient son answered and said, "I will not; but afterward he repented"—that is, unquestionably, "he changed his mind;" and, as the legitimate issue of his repentance, "he went" and did his father's will.

NECESSITY OF REPENTANCE.

In the days of the apostles the world was divided into two classes—Jew and Gentile. Both were *ignorant* of God's glorious salvation, and both required to *change their minds* before they could receive the truth of the gospel of Christ. They were "alienated from the life of God, *through the ignorance*" that was in them, Eph. iv. 18.

The Jews believed that they would be saved because they were the children of Abraham. They boasted of their election of God, and rejected the only way of salvation. They also believed that the MESSIAH was to be an earthly monarch; and when He came "without form or comeliness," He was "despised and rejected" by them. They required to *change* their minds on these points before they could believe the gospel. The Gentiles, on the other hand, had many errors which required to be abandoned ere the truth of the gospel could be accepted. They strongly opposed the doctrine of substitution. To the Jews it was a "stumbling block," and to the Greeks "foolishness."

Considering these facts, we see the force of the Divine injunction, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." The meaning of the command seems to amount to this: "Change your minds regarding Christ and His great salvation. You are altogether wrong in your thoughts of God, and your relationship and responsibility to Him. Believe the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which reveals to you His mind and heart. Give up your wrong thoughts, and receive the truth as it is in Jesus." Thus the GOODNESS of God leads to repentance, Rom. ii. 4. When the sinner gets a sight of God's goodness,

as shown in the cross of Christ, in the long-suffering and forbearance with which God has dealt with him all the while he has been living in rebellion against Him, it changes his mind as to the real character of God—it produces "repentance toward God," and this, accompanied by "faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," Acts xx. 21, is salvation.

Repentance has to do with the *errors abandoned*; *faith*, with the *truths received*. When only repentance is used in Scripture, as in Acts iii. 19, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted," *faith is implied*; the belief of the truth being that *to which* the change is made. When only faith is used, repentance is implied, as in John iii. 36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life"—the reception of truth presupposing a change of mind concerning error.

Unsaved reader! unless you repent *you* must perish eternally. Hitherto you may have supposed that God did not love you. If so, you are terribly mistaken. So much did He love you that He gave up Christ to die on Calvary, to save you from the horrors of an eternal hell. Repent—change your mind regarding this!

But you say, "Surely God is not willing to save me as I am!" Assuredly, dear reader, He is. "Now is the accepted time."

"But I am not sorry enough for my past conduct!" That is all true enough, but God *now* commands you to repent, Acts xvii. 30. He does not say, "Be sorry, and repent," He says, "Repent, and be converted," Acts iii. 19. You are commanded to come to Jesus *with no qualification*—with no good feelings—*just as you are*—"without money and without price"—and take salvation as a gift from the outstretched hand of the Lord Jesus.

"But my heart is so hard!" Then come with your hard heart to Jesus, and He will soften it.

"If you tarry till you're *better*,
You will never come at all."

"But surely I have something *to do* before I can be saved!" You have nothing *meritorious* to do. Jesus has *finished* the work of atonement. *God is perfectly satisfied with what He has done*, and on *that ground*, at this moment, you are heartily welcome to receive pardon, and peace, and eternal life and happiness.

A. M.

WE shall never become established in grace until we credit the Word of God as the self-proving voice of Him who speaks it.

NEARING HOME.

THE Spirit's gales blow fair,
With gentle force they come,
And sweeping on they seem to say,
"Rejoice, you're nearing Home!"

Few storms now lie before,
My heart no more shall roam,
For gleams of day-break surely tell,
I'm nearing, nearing Home.

The fever'd dreams of youth,
Earth's weariness and gloom,
Are passing all—and now I know
The joy of nearing Home.

Rough has the voyage been,
But O! the joys to come!
What strange delight is in the thought,
That I am nearing Home.

Ah, who would change for this,
Earth's pleasures and its doom?
My glowing heart bursts forth in praise,
For I am nearing Home. M. W.

INTRUSION.

THE character of the mind may be effectually tested by this proposal: "What are the things or circumstances which meet a *welcome* from us, and what are those which are felt to be an *intrusion* on us?"

The mind that was in Christ may be thus discerned; and how blessed the employment of looking into that mind, and how precious the fruit it yields! I would notice a few instances in His history, which have struck me as very significant.

The defenders of the law, as they judged themselves, drew the sinner into the presence of Christ, with all her guilt thick and crimson upon her, but that was an *intrusion*. He was as if He saw them not. He was surely *not at home to them*. John viii.

On another occasion, little children were brought, objects that were of no account among men; His disciples treated them as intruders, but He *welcomed* them to His nearest intimacy. So, those who had their various sorrows, and plagues, and necessities, came, and again they were regarded by man as in Christ's way, but He again *gave them the heartiest welcome*, and all that they wanted, as far as He had it for them. Mark vi. 36, 37; Luke vii. 38; Matt. xv. 23; xix. 2; xx. 31.

The mother presented to Him an opportunity of

exhibiting Himself in the world. So on another occasion did his brethren. And the multitude offered him a crown. But this was felt, and, with greater or less warmth, treated as *intrusive*—as a something which sought to retouch or change the whole complexion of His mind. It was all contrary to Him. John ii. 6, 7.

Peter would have had him spare Himself. This again tested the perfect mind that was in Him. It was all *intrusive and out of place*. There was a strong current of self-devoting love, that would have borne Him anywhere in service to others, and this thought of Peter's was therefore a sad trespasser. Matt. xvi.

When the woman brought her precious box—that is, when faith would disclose His hidden glories, and present them to Him—man, wretched man, did not understand such a secret, and was for having her rebuked, and her box taken away. But what said Jesus? What said He, who had refused so firmly *to display Himself in the world* to this prospect of glories *which faith presented to Him*? This precious faith, and its offering, received a *full welcome* from Him. And He who would take nothing in a vain and evil world, delighted in knowing that all was His in and from God. He who refused the kingdoms of the world, from the prince of it, in season will rejoice to take it all from the Father, and the faith that could apprehend this, was most grateful to Him. John xii.

Other instances might be given, but let these suffice; for what a mind do they discover to us! If the *guilt* of others come, it is *intrusive*; if their *sorrows* or *need*, they are *welcome*. If honour, or ease to Himself, *in the world*, be presented, all is *shunned* as something that had broken on the whole current of His soul. But if honour, and ease, or glories that are to fill creation with brightness by-and-by, and which flow to Him *from God*, then welcome the sight, welcome the forethought of such dignities and joys as these.

Perfect Master! Precious mind of Jesus!—beautiful in all its tastes and actings, whether we, or God, or the world, call them forth! What did all these occasions find out in Him, but a mind perfect in every pulse of it!

These occasions are tests, they find out the hidden parts of the belly. What is that which meets a welcome? The answer to this interprets the heart. Bring a scheme for enriching himself, to a man, and if he welcomes it, he is covetous. And if a sinner's *need* was welcome to Christ, but not his *guilt*; if

His own honour *in the world* was an intrusion on Him, but His honour in *God* delightful to Him—what manner of man was Jesus, we may ask? And what is the world, or the men who form it? It is written of them, “A man’s gift maketh room for him.” Most true! Man is welcome to man, if he bring his *present* with him. Man was welcome to Jesus when he brought his *necessities* with him. Our neighbour is too often welcome to our wretched hearts, if he bring with him some tale of another’s *faults*; but not, if his tale be about another’s *necessities*. But Jesus was, as we have now seen, the blessed, Divine contradiction of all this—the Man surely “after God’s own heart.”

J. G. B.

GIVING, FASTING, PRAYING.

IT is instructive to note under what conditions the reward is promised in reference to “giving,” “praying,” and “fasting,” in Matt. vi. 4, 6, 18.

Giving must be in *secret*, not “before men to be seen of them,” “do not sound a trumpet before thee,” “let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.”

Whether giving to the poor, or contributing in any way to the work of the Lord, this Divine principle ought to be carried out. Such a procedure is contrary to the acknowledged custom of Christendom, nature, and man in the flesh, who is ever desirous of vain-glory, self-exaltation, and naturally prone to competition, with his fellow *even in giving*. If the reward is to be openly, the giving is to be done in *secret*—*seen* only by the Father, who Himself gives the reward. Verse 4.

The principle is the same in reference to “prayer.” It must be in the “*closet*,” *alone* with God, wherever the place may be. The “*closet*” is the place where true, real faith in prayer is proved. It is “Pray to thy Father in *secret*.” May we not fear much that is regarded as answers to the “prayer of faith,” is in reality only answers to printed circulars, necessitous appeals—and not as a direct *reward* to the prayer of faith. Pure, unmixed, unadulterated faith, goes direct to God, and asks *only* of Him! “My soul, wait thou *only* upon God,” Psalm lxxii. 5. “Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made *known unto God*,” Phil. iv. 6. “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door,

pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.” Verse 6.

If we were more in the habit of cultivating closet prayer when we assemble together, there would not be the fleshly activity, nor the cold formal lengthy prayer of twenty minutes or half an hour, but each one would be “in the Spirit,” and whether praying audibly or not, the prayer of each would be in the Holy Ghost. Closet prayer would of necessity produce a reverence in our approach, as well as the mode in which we address the Father, See John xvii. 1, 5, 11, 24, 25, when we prayed in the assembly. Eccl. v. 1-4.

Fasting is to be on the same principle. Not to be of a “sad countenance, or appear unto men to fast.” Any ostentatious display of an assumed spirituality beyond and above our fellow-Christian, is to “glory in appearance, and not in heart,” 2 Cor. v. 12, and virtually to say, “Stand by, I am holier than thou.” It was the church at Laodicea, in her self-complacency, said, “I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing”—when alone she was “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,” Rev. iii. 15-18. Thus when the fasting is real and in secret before God, there will be the anointing of the head, and the washing of the face, but it is sure to have its reward. Verse 18.

S. B.

PARENTAL INFLUENCE.

THE influence of the parental character on children is not to be calculated. Everything around has an influence on us. Indeed, the influence of things is so great, that by familiarity with them they insensibly urge on us principles and feelings which we before abhorred. I knew a man who took in a democratical paper, only to laugh at it; but, at length, he had read the same things again and again so often, that he began to think there must be some truth in them, and that men and measures were really such as they were so often said to be. A drop of water seems to have no influence on the stone, but it will in the end wear its way through. If there be, therefore, such a mighty influence in everything around us, the parental influence must be great indeed. Consistency is the great character, in good parents, which impresses children. They may witness much temper, but if they see their father “keep the even tenor of his way,” his imperfections will be understood and allowed for. As reason opens, the

child will see and reflect on his parent's *intention*, and this will have great influence on his mind.

This influence may, indeed, be afterwards counteracted, but that only proves that contrary currents may arise, and carry the child another way.

The implantation of principles is of unspeakable importance, especially when culled from time to time out of the Bible. The child feels his parent's authority, supported by the Bible, and the authority of the Bible supported by his parent's weight and influence. Here are data—fixed data. A man can very seldom get rid of these principles. They stand in his way. He wishes to forget them, perhaps, but it is impossible. Where parental influence does not convert, it hampers. It hangs on the wheels of evil. I had a pious mother who dropped things in my way. I could never rid myself of them. I was a professed infidel; but, then, I liked to be an infidel *in company* rather than when *alone*. I was wretched when by myself. These principles, and maxims, and data spoiled my jollity. With my companions, I could sometimes stifle them: like embers, we kept one another warm. Besides, I was here a sort of hero. I had beguiled several of my associates into my own opinions, and I had to maintain a character before them.

But I could not divest myself of my better principles. I went with one of my companions to see "The Minor." He could laugh heartily at Mother Cole; I could not. He saw in her the picture of all who talked about religion; I knew better. The ridicule on regeneration was high sport to him; to me it was none: it could not move my features. He knew no difference between regeneration and transubstantiation; I did. I knew there was such a thing. I was afraid and ashamed to laugh at it. Parental influence thus cleaves to a man; it harasses him—it throws itself continually in his way.

I find in myself another evidence of the greatness of parental influence. I detect myself to this day in laying down maxims in my family, which I took up at three or four years of age, before I could possibly know the reason of the thing.

It is of incalculable importance to obtain a hold on the conscience. Children have a conscience, and it is not *scared*, though it is *evil*. Bringing the eternal world into their view—planning and acting

with that world before us—this gains, at length, such a hold on them, that with the infidel poison which they may afterwards imbibe, there are few children who, at night—in their chamber, in the dark, in a storm of thunder—will not feel. They cannot cheat, like other men; they recollect that eternity which stands in their way. It goads them: it thunders in their ears. After all, they are obliged to compound the matter with conscience, if they cannot be prevailed on to return to God without delay. "I must be religious one time or other: that is clear. I cannot get rid of this thing. Well! I will begin at such a time. I will finish such a scheme—and then!"

The opinions, the spirit, the conversation, the manners of the parent influence the child. Whatever sort of man he is, such, in a great degree, will be the child, unless constitution or accident give him another turn. If the parent is a fantastic man; if he is a genealogist—knows nothing but who married such an one, and who married such another; if he is a sensualist—a low wretch—his children will usually catch these tastes. If he is a literary man, his very girls will talk learnedly; if he is a griping, hard, miserly man, such will be his children. This I speak of as generally the case. It may happen that the parent's disposition may have no ground to work upon in that of the child: it may happen that the child may be driven into disgust. The miser, for instance, often implants disgust, and his son becomes a spendthrift. After all, in some cases, perhaps, everything seems to have been done and exhibited by the pious parent in vain; yet he *casts his bread upon the waters*; and, perhaps, after he has been in his grave twenty years, his son remembers what his father told him. Besides, parental influence must be great, because *God has said that it shall be so*. The parent is not to stand reasoning and calculating. God has said that his character shall have influence.

And this appointment of Providence becomes often the punishment of a wicked man. Such a man is a complete *selfist*. I am weary of hearing such men talk about their "family," and their "family"—they "must provide for their family." Their family has no place in their real regard; they push for themselves. But God says, "No! You think your children shall be so and so, but they shall be rods for your own backs; they shall be your curse; they shall rise up against you." The most common of all human

complaints is—parents groaning under the vices of their children! This is all the effect of parental influence. In the exercise of this influence, there are two leading dangers to be avoided.

Excess of severity is one danger. My mother, on the contrary, would talk to me, and weep as she talked. I flung out of the house with an oath, but wept too when I got into the street. Sympathy is the powerful engine of a mother. I was desperate; I would go on board a privateer. But there are moments to such desperadoes. God does not, at once, abandon them to themselves. There are times when the man says, "I should be glad to return, but I should not like to meet that face!" *i.e.*, if he has been treated with severity.

Yet excess of laxity is another danger. The case of Eli affords a serious warning on this subject. Instead of his mild expostulation on the the flagrant wickedness of his sons, "Nay, my sons, it is no good report that I hear," he ought to have exercised his authority as a parent and magistrate in punishing and restraining their crimes.

(Extract—RICHARD CECIL.)

BIBLE READING

ON THE EIGHTH CHAPTER OF PROVERBS,

BY ROBERT CHAPMAN.

WE should all be doubtless reminded by this 8th of Proverbs of the 17th chapter of John, 5th verse: "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me, with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." Also of John i. 1: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." I find on reading the eighth chapter of Proverbs that love shines forth before me. I say to myself, "God is love." Since before the world was He had set up His own Son to be what He now is: as we have it in verse 22, "In the beginning of His way, before His works of old." Does it not agree with, "In the beginning was the Word?" Also with 2 Thess. ii, 13: "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation." Does it not tell that the chief purpose in the mind of God (when as yet there was not any creature in being—none but God the Father, the Son, and the Spirit) was the setting up of Christ to be the Head of all things? which now we know He actually has

become. That the creation of angels, men, even the whole creation, is like the spokes of the wheel; it is upon Christ as the axle that everything hangs. It was the purpose of God to *reveal Himself* in Christ; not only to glorify Himself, but to provide Himself in Christ with objects of affection, that He could delight Himself with, and in which He could rest. Does not this agree with Eph. i. 5: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, to Himself?" And is not the force of that, "His own choice, for His own delight?" Then the 6th verse, "To the praise of the glory of His grace." But before mention is made of glory, comes "to Himself." And if we look thus at God as purposing to delight Himself in Christ, and in His children in Christ, does it not follow that HE IS LOVE, and that the one demand upon us is, "Son, give Me thine heart?" It is not only for our comfort, but chiefly for God's delight and joy. "My delights were with the sons of men" Prov. viii. 31.

Some speak as if God's chief design was fulfilled in the salvation of the lost. That is a glorious design, we know. But instead of its being the chief design, it is but a step to the great end. The end is the revelation of God's glory. As truly as an obedient son gives joy to his father whom he loves and reveres, and in whose counsel he delights, so truly is that child not only the glory but the joy of his father. And thus it is that we, walking humbly with God, give joy to God; and should it not be the chief business of our hearts rather to seek what we can give than what we can get from God?

If asked, What can we as creatures give God? we who are nothing but dust and ashes. But then we were the children of wrath—we were dust and ashes—and we are still, as touching the flesh, dust and ashes. But we are not now loved as enemies; we *were* loved when we were enemies, but now we are loved as children. Our obedience and our delight in God is a delight to God. Is it not well to see that? If I delight in God it is not possible to envy any man. There is a chapter which puts one's faith to the test, Prov. xxiii. 15, 16: "My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine; . . . yea my reins shall rejoice when thy lips speak right things." Lest any have the thought, Is this spoken to us? turn to Prov. iii. 11, 12: "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of His correction; for whom the Lord loveth

He correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." Well, we know that it is God who wrote the very words in Heb. xii. 5: "Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him," &c. If any one had any question as to Proverbs being for us Gentile children, surely this word would determine, "which speaketh to you as unto children."

In the 9th chapter we read, "Wisdom hath builded her house; . . . she hath killed her beasts: she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table." In the "killing" and the "wine," we are doubtless reminded of the cross—"Christ crucified." Then the title WISDOM is very precious—it has very much the same significance as the title "WORD," in the beginning of John's gospel, "In the beginning was the Word," &c. This is the force of Christ's title, "*the Word*,"—that unless God had revealed Himself in Christ, His works could never perfectly reveal Him. There is enough, by God's works in creation, to show the creature man his obligation, and to leave him without excuse.

If a man had not any speech he could not tell out his heart, and hence it is the tongue which is called the glory of a man: "Awake up, my glory." The tongue is the glory of the members because it tells out the heart. Every revelation of God by other means than by Christ, is as nothing in comparison with that which would remain unrevealed. Christ is the Word of God; by Him He tells out His bosom secrets. "The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Now we have all that God can possibly reveal of Himself. "God is light," and "God is love." And if He be love, how precious to Him must be His children's heart's affections toward Him, and how grievous to Him must be their lack of affection?

If God unfolds His heart in Christ, then how reasonable the demand, "Son, give Me thine heart?" and ought it not to be the chief business of every day to obey the command, or rather to fulfil the wish, "My son, give Me thine heart?" Are we not all prone to think of what we can get from God, rather than of what we can give to God? God as a Father has everything in Christ that He delights in. John xvii. 23, "I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know

that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me." It is not merely with love *akin to the love* wherewith God the Father has loved Christ. There is *no difference between the love He bears to Christ, and the love He bears to us*. Not only is it a matter of faith to believe this, but it is the highest obedience to believe it. We were children of Adam, but now we are children of God. Strictly speaking, Adam before his fall had no fellowship with God; he had such a knowledge of God as was necessary that he might know his obligation as a creature. Nor, indeed, if we apprehend it, is it possible for God to have fellowship with any creature as a creature; but He must have fellowship with us as sons; and if we be one with His Son, He must dwell in us. Eph. ii. 5, 6. We are not only made to sit together for the security of our salvation, but for the communion of love. Our affections should be there, because God, as it were, looks for us to be there in affection, "together with Christ;" not only in point of security of salvation, but in the Spirit's fellowship: "Builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

THE IMPORTANCE OF A RIGHT CONDITION OF HEART.

IN Matt. 5th chapter we get the word *blessed* nine times in succession from the lips of Jesus, and it occurs in connection with the condition of heart referred to. *Blessed are* "the poor in spirit"—"they that mourn"—"the meek"—"they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness"—"the pure in heart"—"the peace makers"—"the merciful"—"they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake." So we see how important it is to be in a right condition of heart before the Lord, that we may enjoy His blessing, and so have power to witness for Him before the world as "the salt of the earth," or as "the light of the world;" for it is only as we are in fellowship with Him that we can carry out in our daily walk the precepts of His Word; and in obeying the precepts, we enjoy the blessing attached to them. John xiv. 23.

A worshipping spirit is indispensable, if we are to have grace to serve the Lord acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. And thus being in heart and mind separated from this present evil age, we *prove* what is that good, and perfect, and acceptable will of God, to our present personal blessing, and thus glorify our "Father which is in heaven," Matt. v. 16.

So the secret of being continually a happy Christian is to be a Christian in a right state of heart before God; for holiness and happiness are inseparably linked together. The Lord wants joyful service. "God loveth a cheerful giver," 2 Cor. ix. 7. "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance," Prov. xv. 13. And we read in Zech. viii. 19, that the *fasts* referred to there "shall be to the house of Judah joy, and gladness, and cheerful *feasts*"—with the admonition "love the truth and peace." And we see from Deut. xxviii. 47, that it was because the children of Israel served not the Lord with joyfulness and with gladness of *heart* for the abundance of all things, that the awful judgments that overtook them came upon them. May we learn from this the need of delighting ourselves in the Lord, and thus having the joy of the Lord as our strength, Neh. viii. 10-12, and be able to say of the Lord, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon the earth that I desire beside Thee," Psalm lxxiii. 25. And "as the apple among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the sons: I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste," Song of Sol. ii. 3.

W. G. S.

THE CHRISTIAN'S POSITION IN THE WORLD.

THE espoused Bride of Christ has nothing to do with interfering in the affairs of a world which lieth in the wicked one, in order to set that straight which must remain crooked till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, and Jerusalem shall cease to be trodden down by her enemies. The stewardship of power is, up to that time (as we learn from Daniel), committed to the Gentiles in four great successive monarchies, the moral character of which, in the sight of God, as to their use of this trust, is that of "*wild beasts*;" and however men now boast of civilization, national Christianity, and progressive advancement, let it be remembered that the last of these is in God's sight the *worst*. The Church is not *nations*, but a gathering of the children of God from *out* of the nations. Acts xv. 14. Our citizenship is in *heaven*—our character that of *strangers* and *pilgrims* here—our politics those of a *better* country, that is, a *heavenly*—our business to be the "epistles of Christ, known and read of all men." And it is *impossible* for Christians to discharge the duties which devolve on those entrusted with the power and greatness of this world,

without violating the principle as well as the letter of our Lord's injunctions, as above quoted.

Of the magistrate it is said, "He beareth *not* THE SWORD *in vain*; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute WRATH." But the Christian is commanded to recompense to *no man evil for evil*, but "rather give place unto wrath."

SHETLAND.

96 COMMERCIAL STREET,
LERWICK, SHETLAND, Jan. 5th, 1880.

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,

THE fourth half-yearly conference of Christians was held here, in the Mason's Hall, on Thursday, Jan. 1st, 1880. Wednesday being a fine day a great many believers came in from the country. Some of our sisters walked thirty-four miles in order to be present. On Wednesday evening we met at 10 p.m. for prayer, praise, and exhortation. The singing of the 377th Hymn (Gospel and Worship) filled each heart with thoughts of the time when we will

Dwell with Him, and see His face
And sing the glories of His grace.

Shortly after the dawn of the new year we separated. On Thursday we met at 12 noon to spend an hour in prayer. Next two hours were spent with much blessing and profit in the ministry of the Word of God.

After tea, another hour and a half were occupied with several questions sent in, which drew forth some very practical exhortations. We met again at 7-30 to hear addresses to Christians. This meeting, which was truly a blessed one, lasted until 10-30. As Friday was very stormy, few of our country brethren went home, and we spent another evening together, with great blessing and profit to our souls. Never before have we so realized the presence and power of God in these meetings. There being few labourers here at present, and there not being the presence of much gift to count upon, we were more entirely cast upon the Lord Himself. *Our felt weakness* has thus proved a blessing to us, and we have now abundant cause to praise Him for thus casting us upon Himself. Doubtless, many of our brethren in the south were holding us up in prayer; will they now join with us in praising God for so manifestly being with us? "How good is the God we adore." As to numbers, the meeting

was quite up to any which have gone before, the Hall being quite filled.

In the country the new year holiday is observed on the 12th of January. The believers in Whiteness have arranged to have meetings there on that date for the benefit of many of the Lord's people, who are not able to get to Lerwick. We are looking to the Lord

for much blessing in these meetings. Brother M'Intyre then expects to go south to Hoswick, Levenwick, and other places open for the Gospel. The Lord willing, I expect to remain some time in the west side. We have had some encouragement in gospel work. Will the Lord's people still pray for us?

ALEX. S. RIGG.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Question No. 1.—What is the meaning of Romans ii. 6, 7, and John v. 29?

Reply.—It is fully recognised in Scripture that a regenerate and justified person, one who is therefore truly a child of God, will bear a corresponding character. Nothing short of this can be accepted as evidence that he is a Christian. See 1 John iii. 7—"Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous." Again, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God," 1 Cor. vi. 9.

The two passages above—viz., Romans ii. 6, 7, and John v. 29—describe the saved and the unsaved by their respective *characters*.

The fact that a Christian is imperfect, often failing in practical righteousness and holiness, does not affect that which is equally a fact, that in the main that which characterizes his life is righteousness. A wedge of gold might be mixed with particles of silver or copper, but still it remains true as to the bulk that it is a wedge of gold.

Question No. 2.—Does God give a special gift of faith to a sinner before he can receive Christ as his Saviour, to the saving of his soul, apart from the gift that God has given to him naturally, whereby he can "receive the witness of men?" 1 John v. 9.

Reply.—Men are naturally indisposed to believe that which is unpalatable to them. What they do not want to believe they will question. But there is nothing essential to the nature of man which either indisposes or incapacitates him to receive the testimony of fellow-men, provided there be no definite ground for doubting the reliability of the witness.

But there is in man's nature an alienation from God amounting to enmity, and a consequent suspicion of and prejudice against God's testimony, which renders

him incapable of believing the truth which God declares to him.

The real difficulty, to remove which, supernatural grace must be bestowed, is not in the act of believing, as the passage above quoted (1 John v. 9) shows; for God claims to be believed solely upon the ground of His testimony being TRUE (See John viii. 46—"If I say the truth, why do ye not believe Me?") The real obstruction to the belief of God's testimony is in the *will*. It is here that GRACE must first operate. Hence the reception of the peace-giving testimony of the Gospel is often preceded by a course of providential dealings which, together with the Word of God, have operated in breaking down the stubborn will, and preparing the heart to receive in simplicity the truth that formerly was despised and rejected.

Faith is Divine when it rests upon a Divine testimony. There is such a thing as a belief of the Scriptures and of Scriptural doctrines which does not rest upon God, but upon the wisdom of man. Such might be called an historical or an educational belief. A child at school learns at an early age by rote the multiplication table. He believes that 5 times 4 are 20 because his teacher and his lesson-book have taught him so. If another teacher and another lesson-book taught him that 5 times 4 are 21 he would believe it as readily. But in after years he has learned the truth absolutely by hundreds of proofs that 5 times 4 are 20—and all the teachers and books in the world could not shake his belief, for he perceives that it is absolute truth.

Something like this is the difference between that kind of belief of the Scriptures, and of doctrines which the unregenerate, but orthodox and religious professing Christians, possess, and that of true believers.

This kind of belief, this reception of God's word as the word of man (See 1 Thess. ii. 13), is now-a-days being everywhere overturned.

It is like the child's first belief of the multiplication table; infidelity and scepticism are too strong for it, and the erring but mighty intellects of modern religious teachers are sweeping away the old landmarks.

But the belief of the testimony of God, which rests on God Himself, lays hold of the Gospel because it is God's provision for the sinner's need, and embraces the Scriptures because it perceives that they are Divine, with as absolute certainty as the man perceives the truth of the multiplication table. Such faith cannot be shaken by the reasonings of man. It is the precious faith of God's elect; and from the first awakening under the providence or word of God to the ultimate peace and joy in God Himself, it is *supernatural* and *divine*.

Question No. 3.—Who should arrange for and control Gospel meetings in the Hall in connection with an Assembly? Is there any Scriptural authority for the "overseers" claiming the right to do so?

Reply.—As there is no instance in Scripture of a Gospel Meeting being held in a Hall in connection with an Assembly, it is of course impossible to answer by reference to any particular text. The broad principles laid down in Scripture must therefore guide.

We do not know of any department of Christian life and service that ought not to come under the cognisance and control of those who have oversight.

The severance of Gospel work, Sunday-school work, and other efforts from the guidance and wisdom of those exercising pastoral care is a fruitful source of mischief, and dishonour to the Lord.

No work for the Lord in connection with an assembly can be expected to go on to His glory where the sympathy, guidance, and prayers of those in oversight are not sought.

The arrangement of details ought to be in the hands of those best fitted for such a service; but by whomsoever undertaken, ought never to be done in a spirit of independence, but in fellowship with and in subjection to one another. 1 Peter v. 5.

It must at the same time be admitted that those exercising oversight do not always act wisely, in which case the place of subjection may be difficult to maintain, but ought never to be surrendered. "Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father," 1 Tim. v. 1.

Question No. 4.—What is the meaning of Rom. viii. 6, 9, 10, 11, and 13?

Reply.—A full explanation of these verses would go far beyond the limits available for replies to questions; but we suppose that the special point which seems to present a difficulty is in such expressions as, "to be carnally minded is death," and "if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die."

Let it be remembered that the life and death of these verses are not eternal life and eternal death as the consequence of receiving or refusing Christ. The chapter opens with the absolute statement, "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus;" for the apparently qualifying words, "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," should not be there, according to the best manuscripts and the judgment of all the textual critics.

Then the Apostle goes on to show that practical righteousness will be the fruit of the principle or law of life according to which the believer is called to walk. Everything that springs from this living source partakes of its character, while all that springs from the flesh is death. See verse 6.

In the same way, Gal. vi. 7, 8 tells believers that the fruit of all sowing to the flesh is corruption or death, while the fruit of sowing to the Spirit is life—the fruit always being of similar character to its source.

Also, in the same way the Lord instructs His disciples, Matt. xvi. 24-26, that self-seeking is a simple loss of our life, while giving up our life, or denying ourselves, saves our life for eternity. The words, "his own soul" and "his soul," of verse 26, should be "his life," being exactly the same as in verse 25; and the thought is not that of a sinner perishing, but of a disciple, who, having pleased himself instead of his Master, will find that nothing is left of all that he has done; his life is a lost life.

NOTICES.

MR. JOHN BRUNTON has left London, and his present address is Red Brick House, Bottesdale, Suffolk.

Aberdeen.—Owing to Miss KEMP leaving Aberdeen, the Monthly Papers, Tracts, Hymn Books, Bibles, &c., can be had as usual from ALEXANDER WALLACE, 35 Richmond Street.

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LONDON

JAMES E. HAWKINS,
12 Paternoster Sq., E. C.,
and 36 Baker Street, W.

MARCH,
1880.

GLASGOW

GEO. TURNER & Co.,
40 Sauchiehall Street.

HUMILITY.

“Be clothed with humility” (1 Peter v. 5).

WHEN the Lord Jesus was setting Himself forth as the believer's Example, that feature of His character to which He called special attention was, “I am meek and lowly in heart.”

When the Apostle in like manner is setting Him before the saints at Philippi, he writes, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,” and then describes the marvellous path of humiliation which He trod, from the bosom of God to the Cross. Phil. ii. 5-9.

So, also, after describing to the Ephesians the glory of the church's calling, the grandeur of the position that grace has raised the believer to in union with the risen Christ, he begins to exhort them to walk worthy of such a vocation, “with all lowliness and meekness.” Eph. iv. 1, 2

This is, as it were, the foundation grace in the character of the Lord Jesus; and, unless it be reproduced in the believer as the very basis of his Christian character, resemblance to Christ is but a delusion and an impossibility.

The exaltation of self is the very essence of the carnal mind. Therefore it is “enmity against God;” “it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be,” Rom. viii. 7. The poison that Satan first injected into the mind of man was, “Ye shall be as gods.” This thought of foolishness was sin, Prov. xxiv. 9. It was harboured in the mind and soon bore fruit in the life, the fruit of disobedience to God. Self had usurped the place of God. Pride had dethroned humility. This deadly poison of pride, vain-glory, self-exaltation,

has, ever since the fall, circulated in the life-blood of every child of Adam. In early childhood, self asserts its rights and pushes itself in before everything else. In boyhood, whether at play or at work, self is uppermost, self is asserted and glorified; any other consideration is felt to be an intrusion. In after life, whatever the nature of the pursuit, to make a position and a name for self is the universal object. Everything is judged according as it will affect the supposed honour and interests of self. It may seriously affect others and be little regarded, it may dishonour God and yet be even approved; but if it detract from self, then is it resented with zeal and energy.

Such is the history of man; but “pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.” Prov. xvi. 18. So was it at Babel. The men who said, “Let us build us a tower, let us make us a name,” were soon put to confusion and scattered. So was it with Nebuchadnezzar, as he said, “Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?” The same hour, “he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven.” So will it be with Antichrist, who is yet to come, “who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God;” but “whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming.” 2 Thess. ii. 4, 8. And such is the present spirit of the mystic Babylon around us, which bears the holy name of Christ, but hath “glorified herself, and lived deliciously; . . . she

saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day; death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her." Rev. xviii. 7, 8.

One of God's seven abominations is, "a proud look," Prov. vi. 17. "Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord: though hand join in hand he shall not be unpunished," Prov. xvi. 5.

Very many more Scriptures might be adduced to show God's estimate of the sin of pride, and God's estimate of the grace of lowliness; but the reader can search them out, and will find profit in so doing.

It is greatly to be feared that many who profess conversion were never really humbled before God. The gospel of God's grace announces full provision both for the pardon of sin and for deliverance from its power; but God's method of salvation is first to break down the pride of the heart by conviction of sin; and then, by the gospel, "to bind up the broken heart." The "stout hearted" are "far from righteousness," Isa. xlvii. 12; "The proud He knoweth afar off," Psalm cxxxviii. 6.

There is such a thing as applying the healing balm where wounding is the thing required, and binding up in its pride and self-complacency the heart that has never been broken.

The salvation of God is a humbling process. It reduces all to one low level before it lifts any up. "Guilty before God" is the verdict upon all. "No difference, for all have sinned." The rich is brought down to the level of the poor—the Pharisee to the level of the publican—the resolute moralist to the level of the profligate—there, as lost, defiled, diseased, leprous, blind, dead, ungodly, sinners, enemies, stripped of every rag of self-righteousness and respectability—there, sunk low in trespasses and sins—*there* it is that God's salvation meets the sinner.

It was one of the statutes concerning the great day of atonement in Israel, that on that day every man should "afflict his soul," Lev. xvi. 29-31. The Hebrew word there rendered "afflict," is the same that elsewhere is rendered "humble," and it might better convey the Divine idea so to render it.*

It was a day upon which "remembrance again was made of sins every year," Heb. x. 3, and the great atoning work foreshadowed, by which sin was to be expiated.

* See same word so rendered, Exod. x. 3; Deut. viii. 2, 3, 16.

Therefore were they to rest, for grace could not admit of human labour; and they were to be humbled before God, for grace could not admit of human pride.

Thus God begins His saving work in the soul, which being once begun by Him, "He will perform until the day of Christ." Phil. i. 6.

There is a concealed, self-willed, high-minded, stiff-necked, brood of so-called "converts," who make a glib, light-hearted profession, often counted and boasted of as the fruit of sensational gospel preaching. Is it to be wondered at that soon they go back to the world, which in heart they had never left; and to the sins which, before God, they had never mourned?

Let those who deal with souls beware, lest they dignify with the title of "conversion," what is merely a passing emotion; lest they "heal the hurt slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace," Jer. vi. 14; lest, whilst they imagine they are congratulating a new-born soul, they are fastening upon an unbroken heart the fetters of a fatal satanic delusion.

But Divine life ever springs from a broken and contrite heart. It is like the fruitful seed that is rooted in the deep-ploughed soil. Cast upon the hard and stony ground of the unbroken heart, the seed is soon devoured; but kept in the heart that grace has ploughed and broken, it springs up and bears fruit unto eternal life. Thus conversion to God produces at the outset a spirit of humility before God, and, closely allied to this, a spirit of meekness before men.

He who abides where grace puts him at the first—who grows in personal acquaintance with the Lord Jesus, and who meditates upon His character as revealed in the Scriptures, who judges himself by comparison with Christ, and not with fellow-mortals, and so keeps ever in conscious nearness to His pierced side—such an one will imbibe the very spirit of Christ—"the meekness and gentleness of Christ" will be seen upon him—he will "put on, as the elect of God, humbleness of mind"—he will "be clothed with humility."

The carnal mind is wont to adorn self in such raiment and ornaments as will be admired and estimated at a high value by man. Not so the mind of Christ. Like the tabernacle of old, the exterior of which was of "badgers' skins," and might be said to be without form or comeliness, whilst it was all glorious within, as befitted the dwelling place of God. So was the Lord Jesus. Outwardly, there was no beauty

which the carnal eye could desire ; but within, how lovely ! How richly ornamented in the sight of God the "hidden man" of that meek and lowly heart ! God knew what it cost to maintain under all the testings He endured, that meek and quiet spirit, and in His sight it was most precious. And such is the adorning which every child of God should seek to possess. Not what men will most admire—the goodly Babylonish garment and the wedge of gold ; not the gold, and pearls, and costly array with which the Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth is seen to attract earth's monarchs ; not the proud and haughty mien which the world respects, and which will be fully developed in him whom all the world will wonder after and worship—but "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." 1 Pet. iii. 4.

There be some who are highly-gifted and able to take a leading place among brethren ; but they never were known to confess that they were wrong. There are others who cannot bear to be told their faults ; if convicted, they will probably seek to prove that others are as bad as they. Some, if slighted by another, will immediately take offence, and after all, how often the offence is taken at what was only imaginary.

Where is the spirit now of the apostle, "being reviled, we bless ; being persecuted, we suffer it ; being defamed, we entreat ?"

Many are puffed up by knowledge. They have clear heads and retentive memories, and they have learned rapidly, and knowledge has given them influence, *and they know it*. They cannot bear to be opposed. He who questions their dogmatic assertions is accounted no longer their friend. Humbleness of mind is lacking.

And how often does the ordinary conversation of Christians betray lamentably the absence of this spirit ! Where true humility exists, each will "esteem other better than himself." But how often is heard the story of the faults of one, the follies of another, the ignorance of a third, the errors of a fourth, the pride of a fifth, the low condition of one assembly, the divisions of another, the badness and wrongness of every one but self—not a word against self—self is held sacred, free from complicity in folly or sin, all that are named are condemned in the most unconcerned and sweeping style, whilst self is left exalted on a pinnacle of conscious perfection, a little antichrist—stuffed full of spiritual conceit.

Is it to be wondered at that edification is low, that roots of bitterness spring up, that backslidings and divisions appear, if such be the conversation often indulged in by those who ought to be "ensamples to the flock ?"

Even when one has been overtaken in a fault, and the spiritual seek to effect his restoration, this is to be done "in the spirit of meekness." Gal. vi. 1. The spiritual one is not to despise or severely judge the other, but to "consider himself lest he also be tempted." True humility will ever keep in view the frailty of self, and that grace alone makes the restorer to differ from the erring one.

And when restoration has been effected, nothing will more surely characterize the restored one than "the spirit of meekness." How evident this is in Psalm li. No justifying of self there. If Shimei curse the Lord's anointed, the spirit of meekness replies, "God hath bid him curse." The truly restored soul will not be unwilling to take the low place till such time as their restoration is evident to all.

"Only by pride cometh contention," Prov. xiii. 10. This is a solemn Scripture ; it touches, as with a needle's point, the secret source of sorrow, division, and alienation among brethren.

There are some Christians who seem to live in an atmosphere of contention. They are the stormy petrels of spiritual life. They are always on "the opposition bench," and seldom off the judgment seat. A kindly suggestion they cannot make ; everything is done in a spirit of fault-finding. Such are a mighty hindrance to the growth in grace of the unestablished with whom they are associated. Pride, unjudged, unbroken, unsubdued, is at the root of this. "Liberty" is their favourite cry, but all the while they are in bondage to the pride of their own hearts. Oh, that their eyes were opened to see their hideous deformity !

The Lord Jesus set an ever-memorable example of service in washing the feet of His disciples. The law of His kingdom is, that the greatest shall be servant of all. But this involves "humbleness of mind." None can effectually serve another until he can stoop down to the lowliest service that his necessities demand. The lack of true humility is the cause of the scarcity of ministry in its more lowly and unseen paths. It is the natural pride of the human heart that makes it easier to speak to a congregation than to an individual. Self commonly loves to be seen and heard. The

individual dealing, the fireside exhortation, have not the attractions of the platform, and are not so much sought after.

But He who stooped to purge in His own blood the filth of sin is now rewarded. Crowned with glory and honour, exalted to the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, God has set His seal to that lowly life and lowlier death. He that humbled Himself has been exalted; and blessed are they who follow in His steps.

J. R. C.

PRIDE.

"THE FEAR OF THE LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogance, and the evil way, and the froward mouth do I hate" (Prov. viii. 13).

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ARE A STANDING REBUKE TO EVERY FORM OF PRIDE TO WHICH MEN ARE LIABLE.

Pride of Birth and Rank—

"Is not this the Carpenter's son?" (Matt. xiii. 55).

Pride of Wealth—

"The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head" (Matt. viii. 20).

Pride of Respectability—

"Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John i. 46). "HE shall be called a Nazarene" (Matt. ii. 23).

Pride of Personal Appearance—

"HE hath no form nor comeliness" (Isa. liii. 2).

Pride of Reputation—

"Behold a man gluttonous and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners" (Matt. xi. 19).

Pride of Independence—

"Many others which ministered unto Him of their substance" (Luke viii. 3).

Pride of Learning—

"How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" (John vii. 15).

Pride of Superiority—

"I AM among you as he that serveth" (Luke xxii. 27). "HE humbled Himself" (Phil. ii. 8). "Made a curse for us" (Gal. iii. 13).

Pride of Success—

"HE came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John i. 11). "Neither did His brethren believe in Him" (John vii. 5). "HE is despised and rejected of men" (Isa. liii. 3).

Pride of Self-Reliance—

"He went down to Nazareth and was subject unto them" (Luke ii. 51).

Pride of Ability—

"I can of mine own self do nothing" (John v. 30).

Pride of Self-will—

"I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John v. 30).

Pride of Intellect—

"As My Father hath taught me, I speak these things" (John viii. 28).

Pride of Bigotry—

"Forbid him not: . . . for he that is not against us is on our part" (Mark ix. 39, 40).

Pride of Resentment—

"Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii. 34). "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" (Matt. xxvi. 50).

Pride of Reserve—

"My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death: tarry ye here and watch with me" (Matt. xxvi. 38). "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected."

Pride of Sanctity—

"This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them" (Luke xv. 2). "Learn of Me; for I AM meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. xi. 29).

"God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. vi. 14).

FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.

CHAP. XI.—THE PILLAR OF CLOUD AND FIRE.

"He spread a cloud for a covering, and fire to give light in the night" (Psalm cv. 39).

"The Lord . . . that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt" (Jer. ii. 6).

SINNERS need a *Saviour*, captives need a *deliverer*, and pilgrims need a *guide*.

Saved from judgment, and delivered from Pharaoh's iron grasp, the ransomed people depart from Egypt, its people, and its gods. They bid farewell to them for ever. Canaan lies before them, and thither their feet press on. "He led them forth by the *right way*, that they might go to a city of habitation," Psalm cvii. 7. But many who start on "the right way" do not continue to walk in it. They turn aside into "hyepath meadow." Moreover, "the right way" is always a way of difficulty and trials, and the devil's aim is to frighten or allure the believer from it. But the God of love, who from His holy habitation beheld us toiling as sinners in the service of Satan, and gave His Son to be our deliverer, has foreseen our danger on the journey home as saints, and has given the Holy Spirit to be our guide. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost have been all engaged in the work of our salvation;

and they are all engaged in our home-bringing to the rest above! O how much we owe—how much our God has done to make and keep us safe and happy! How can we murmur or repine!

“Think how God the Father loves thee,
Jesus whispers, ‘Thou art Mine;’
God the Spirit dwells within thee,
Child of heaven! wilt thou repine?”

Encamped in Etham, on the edge of the wilderness, and not knowing a step of the way that lay between them and their Canaan home, how it must have gladdened their beating hearts to see the pillar of cloud descend. Unasked, and we may guess unexpected, God came down in the cloudy pillar to be their guide—to walk with them, to defend them, and to be their companion. What though the way be long and dreary, and the “great and terrible wilderness” beset with dangers, and filled with fiery serpents and scorpions, as long as God is with them! Every step and every danger are known to Him, and if they only follow whither He doth lead, all is well and shall be well.

In the daytime the cloud was a covering stretching over the entire camp, to screen them from the heat; and as the shades of evening fell, it became a pillar of fire to give them light. *Psalm cvi. 39.* So they were never in darkness. To travel by night was as easy as by day, for the Lord God was their light, and there was no night there. How faithfully and lovingly He performed His guiding work as the Shepherd of Israel, the words of *Deut. xxxiii. 10–12* tell us: “He *found* him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He *led* him about. He *instructed* him. He *kept* him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord *alone* did *lead* him, and there was no strange god with him.” And blessed to tell it, their failures, their murmurings, and their sins did not drive Him away, nor make Him withdraw the cloudy pillar from them; it accompanied them all the forty years of their pilgrimage, it hovered above them as they marched in triumph through the dried up bed of Jordan, and at last found its rest amid the glories of the temple, in the land. And this God is *our* God for ever and ever. He knew ere He took our case in hand how faithless we would prove. He, and He only, knew the terrible depths of enmity that dwelt within us, and yet He loved us, and loves us still, and will love us and walk with us to the end.

The threefold position of the cloud tells of God *for* us, God *with* us, and God *in* us. At the Red Sea it stood between them and their foes, *Exod. xiv. 19*; as they walked along the desert it went before them to seek out a resting-place, *Nam. ix. 17*; and in the tabernacle it rested in their midst, *Exod. xl. 34*. When the cloud moved they arose and followed, whether it was by day or night; when it rested so did they. And what a sight it must have been to see the many thousands of Israel arise and march at Jehovah’s bidding! How dependent it kept them too! Every moment was of His arranging—man’s will, man’s reason had no place at all. It was their’s to obey, it was His to command. He was the Shepherd, they were the sheep. And if they only kept their eyes on the cloud, and followed as it led, they needed never to be in darkness nor in doubt where to go next. Nor need you, dear young believer. He who guided Israel across the dreary desert by the pillar of cloud and fire, has not left you unprovided. He has given you *His Spirit* and *His Word*. They are to be your pillar of cloud and fire till desert days are done. In their light you will walk safely and securely—you will walk with God. Of the latter it is written, “Thy Word is a *lamp* unto my feet, and a *light* unto my path,” *Psalm cxix. 105*; and of the former, “He shall guide you into all truth, and show you things to come,” *John xvi. 3*. O how blessed it would be for God’s people if they knew and sought no other Counsellor, if they knew no other Guide! Then should the oft-repeated, but we fear but little realized, words be true of us—

“Light Divine surrounds thy going,
God Himself shall mark thy way,
Secret blessings richly flowing,
Lead to everlasting day.”

And here it may not be out of place to ask the young believer’s attention to the teaching of Holy Scripture on two deeply important subjects, namely, (1) *The Person and Work of the Holy Ghost*, and (2), *The Authority and Sufficiency of Holy Scripture*. Let him take his Bible and search what God has there said on these momentous subjects, seeking to lay aside what tradition or man may have taught him in former days, and we feel assured he will rise from his study both edified and comforted, and we may safely add, amazed and overwhelmed at the deep dishonour done to that “other Comforter,”—not only in the world, where He is *resisted*, *Acts vii. 51*; but also in his own heart and in the professing Church, where He has been so often

grieved, and His gracious leadings and ministries have been so often *quenched*. (See Eph. v. 30; 1 Thess. v. 19.) No less will he be amazed at the laxity and positive infidelity that abounds concerning the Word of the everliving God.

"The other Comforter" promised by the Lord Jesus on the eve of His departure, is a Divine Person, and not an "influence," as you so often hear Him called by religious people. Think of calling "the Eternal Spirit" an "influence!" Ten days after the Risen One ascended from Mount Olivet and took His seat at the right hand of God the Holy Ghost came down. From that day until now He has been here, although, as in the day of the cloudy pillar of old, the people whose Guide He came to be have proved unfaithful and unworthy of such a Friend. Still He is here; and as our Lord has told us, He will abide with us for ever, John xiv. 16; not surely because we deserve it, but as of old the cloud rested on the blood of atonement on the mercy-seat, during the forty years of wilderness failure, and left them not alone for an hour, so the Holy Ghost abides with us, on the ground of accomplished redemption; and inasmuch as nothing can tarnish nor shake the perfect work of Christ, nothing can make the Spirit of God depart from us. And if this be so, you will be able to judge of the ignorance of addressing prayer to God asking Him to "send down the Holy Ghost," "to pour out," and "baptize us" with the Spirit—as if these things had never yet been done, or as if they had to be repeated.

What the Word does teach on this, so far as we know it, is, that when a sinner believes the Gospel, he is at once sealed by the Holy Spirit, Eph. i. 13. God thus puts His stamp on him, and says, "Thou art Mine." The Spirit of God now dwells within him, witnessing with his spirit that he is God's child, and raising the cry, "Abba, Father," Gal. iv. 6. He is also the *earnest* of glory to come, and of the redemption of the body, 2 Cor. i. 22; Eph. i. 14, for the body too shall bear the image of the heavenly at the coming of the Lord.

By this indwelling Spirit we worship; and only such worship as is begotten within the heart of the saint by Him is accepted of the Father, John iv. 23, 24; Phil. iii. 3. O that the saints had remembered this! it would have saved them from the devil's snare in many a form. They would never have fallen so far as to join with the children of the devil in forming a choir, to make the singing an attraction to draw the world

to worship. And yet such is the case! The poor blind world we do not wonder at, but the saints of God, indwelt by His Spirit, in full harmony with such works of the flesh we are amazed and ashamed to behold. Surely they have become hardened in heart, and seared in conscience through resisting the truth the indwelling Spirit has so often brought before them.

He is also our *Teacher*, John xvi. 14; 1 John ii. 27. Without His teaching the Word of God will be an unlocked treasure; for "the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God," 1 Cor. ii. 11. This is humbling to man's pride, it sets aside his skill and wisdom, and puts his boasted science in its proper place—*nowhere*, in respect to spiritual things. The babe in Christ—the convert of yesterday—who in singleness of heart and simplicity, sits down to search the Word of God, depending on the Spirit's teachings, will learn *in reality* more of God than all the wisecracks in modern universities could ever give him; for these deep things of God have been hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed to babes. This is a comforting truth to the isolated saint; he may be shut up in some lonely spot, far sundered from his brethren; the fellowship of saints and the ministry of the teacher are denied him, but blessed be the God of all grace, he is not alone. The best of all "expositors" is his, even the Spirit of God; and if he lives in His ungrieved power, he will be taught of Him; and what we learn of Him will not be readily forgotten or let slip. Theoretical knowledge is cheap, but it profits little; it is easily acquired and greedily sought after, but may we, beloved, know in our souls the still small voice speaking to us of Jesus in the Word, and so shall we abide in Him. It is well to know this, because we fear there is a lurking idea among many of the saints, whose avowed principles would surely teach them otherwise, that only a "learned man" can expound the Scriptures in a way we can have confidence in, and this because he has studied a little of the Greek and Hebrew. This will lead to the recognition of false ministry and priestcraft, as it exists around us; it is the blind that they use to deceive the poor souls that hang on their lips; and so the people rest satisfied that the "learned man" to whom they have committed the care of their souls, and he only, can expound the Word of God.

The hot-bed where clerisy is seen in full bloom declares that only the ordained and thorough-bred clergyman can expound the Word, and the people of

course believe it. Others may not go quite so far, but are in the same boat; the germ of the evil is there; and that is, that God's Word is a sealed book to common people, and that those *educated* in the world's universities are its only exponents. No doubt it may be a helpful thing to be able to read and examine critically the original language in which the Scriptures were written; if this knowledge is under the power of grace it will be so; but let not the "unlearned and ignorant" among God's saints be downcast and sad; if this is not within their reach, let them rest satisfied that under the guidance and teaching of the Holy Ghost they will become mighty in the Scriptures, and be in possession of God's thoughts, by searching, studying, and meditating on the Word of God as they can read it in their mother-tongue. Thus shall they be "filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." Col. i. 9.

Our "bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost," 1 Cor. vi. 19, therefore how watchful we should be of them. We have often thought, if this were always remembered, it would have a wonderful effect on the saints, in leading them to study their style of dress—to watch the words of their lips, and ponder the paths of their feet; for what dress befits a body in which God is dwelling? Surely not the tinkling ornament, or the costly robe, that attracts the world's admiring eye, and pampers and puffs the flesh within the owners, till besotted with pride, they drop into the snare of the devil, and become his easy prey.

It is our privilege, too, to be led of the Spirit, not only in our worship, but also in our walk and everyday life. To enjoy this guiding day by day, we must have broken wills and contrite spirits. The lordship of Christ—His absolute authority over us—must be practically owned in every department of our lives, and His Word alone must be our counsellor. His leading will always be contrary to nature, irksome to the flesh—a path where faith alone can walk. Remember the path of Jesus. From His baptism in Jordan He was "led of the Spirit" to be tempted of the devil, and finally to suffer the agony of the cross!

Beloved, are you prepared for such a path when you ask that God's Spirit may guide you? It means self-denial, trial, and suffering, but the joy no tongue can tell. And here let me caution the young believer against a "spurious" leading of the Spirit, much spoken of at the present time. It is Satan's counter-

feit of this most blessed reality. Every conceivable and ungodly action, done under a pretended sanctity, is attributed to the leading of the Spirit. Believers marry the ungodly, go into partnership in business with them, and sit with them at the communion-table, and then tell us they were "*led*" to do it—"it was *laid upon their heart.*" This is as false as it is impossible. The Spirit's leading will be *always in harmony with, and in no case contrary to, the written Word.* The Holy Spirit will ever lead to obey the Word, never to ignore it; for how could He inspire an apostle to write, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers," and then lead the saint to ignore it? Let the young believer ponder this. No path, no undertaking, can be the leading of the Spirit that has not the sanction of the written Word; nor is it of any use to ask the guidance of the Lord in a thing His Word condemns. Remember Jehoshaphat! He bargained with ungodly Ahab, and then went to enquire of the Lord about it—to try and calm his conscience. This was asking God to sanction the ungodliness. A lying spirit was the answer. Let us beware!

Cleaving to the Lord and the Word of His grace, and walking in His Spirit's power, we shall be led on safely. Earth's darkest days shall be bright with His presence—and there is no night there. Our home is before us, and the way though rough is bright. "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy countenance." Psalm lxxxix. 15.

J. R.

If God should restore me again to health, I have determined to study nothing but the Bible. Literature is inimical to spirituality, if it be not kept under with a firm hand. A man ought to call in from every quarter whatever may assist him to understand, explain, and illustrate the Bible: but *there*, in its light and life, is all that is good for man. All-important truth is there; and I feel that no comfort enters sick curtains from any other quarter. My state is an admonition to young men. I have been too much occupied in *preparing to live*, and too little in *living*. I have read too much from curiosity, and for mental gratification. I was literary when I should have been active. We trifle too much. Let us do something for God. The man of God is a man of feeling and activity. I feel, and would urge with all possible strength on others, that Jesus Christ is our *All and in All*.—Richard Cecil.

OBEDIENCE AND VICTORY.

NOTES OF ADDRESS BY COLIN CAMPBELL.

AT this time Israel had crossed the Jordan, and were now in the land—the land which God had promised to give them—“A good land, flowing with milk and honey.” Unbelief kept them out of it for forty years; but they are now in possession of that which God had given to them. It was a gift from God. Although given to them, they had to possess it by conquest. The whole land was before them, given to them by the Lord; but theirs practically, as they took it from the enemy who opposed them at every step.

I take this as an illustration of the blessings—the goodly portion that God has given to us in Christ. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ,” Eph. i. 3. The sinner saved only yesterday possesses that portion as well as the sinner saved forty years ago, inasmuch as it is a gift from God to him. He has laid his hand on Christ, and he says, Christ is mine, and I am His; and you know you cannot possess more than Christ. “For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell,” Col. i. 19. We are blest with the goodly portion given to us in Christ; and we have said the children of Israel had to possess the land by conquest, as the enemy withstood them at every step; so you and I, while we are blest with all spiritual blessings in Christ, yet practically we have to possess them by spiritual conquest. They are mine; yet they are in experience mine only as I take possession of them by faith. Dear friends, there is a trinity of evil very mighty, which stands before the child of God at the very outset of his Christian life. These powers are far too strong for him, just as the Canaanites were mightier than Israel. But it was not a matter between Israel and them, but Jehovah and them. He had said, “I will drive them out:” now drive you them out. “We are not able to take the land,” saith unbelief; “we are well able to take it,” says faith. “If the Lord delight in us, He will make them bread for us.” Just as it was by the power of Jehovah that Israel were to take possession of the land; so the Lord is our strength to enable us to take possession of all His spiritual blessings given to us in Christ.

There were certain preliminaries before the land was to be possessed.

“It came to pass when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him, with his sword drawn in his hand.” Joshua, soldier like, drew his sword ready for conflict, and said, “Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?” “Nay, but as captain of the host of the Lord am I now come.” Here is the principle Joshua has got to start with in the conquest of the land—that he is a servant under the authority of another, and his part was simply to obey Him. May the good Spirit of the Lord, whose grace we have sought, not allow us to pass over this great and important principle. “What saith my Lord unto His servant?” That man who has to conquer others, has to be conquered himself first. There is a land before us to be possessed; precious and glorious things as to spiritual enjoyment to be laid hold on; but here are our preliminaries.

We have got this length—Jesus is our Saviour. He has saved us. Have we given Him the place of our Captain? Is this the attitude of our souls? “What saith my Lord unto His servant?” Is the Lord Jesus not only become our Saviour, but is He our Lord and Captain? Is all we have, laid at His feet? Like Isaiah, “Here am I, send me.”

So, my beloved ones, have you and I by the Lord been brought to that place, and been, body, soul, and spirit, put at His feet, knowing Him as our Captain. Joshua got this length, and it is a blessed position. It is no longer, I will; but what wilt Thou? It is not, Bringing my plans to the Lord, and asking Him to bless them; but it is, coming to the Lord and getting His plans from Him—learning His mind in communion with Himself.

In the 6th chapter, we see Joshua put to the test. The taking of Jericho was a difficult task, but how wonderfully accomplished. Joshua’s will was sorely put to the test at the beginning. There was nothing so unreasonable as solemnly walking round about that city. He had to trust in the Lord with all his heart, and not lean to his own understanding. His captains might have said, “That is not the way to take the city. Scale the walls, and take it in military style.” Joshua would have replied, “No! the Lord hath said, that we are simply to walk round about it, as He instructed us. I am a servant, and not the captain,

and my place is to obey." And he did obey, and Jericho was taken. We shall be successful or victorious, just as we obey our Lord, no matter how our brains may reason; our mind is to be in subjection to Christ. The Lord's will must be done, and if so, like Paul, we will be able to say, "God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ." "Follow thou Me." Lord, I cannot understand it, it looks very curious. "Follow thou Me;" and following Jesus, we cannot go wrong.

Count upon victory, which is the certain result of following your Captain. No matter how it may disagree with your opinions. "His way is perfect;" and David says, "He maketh my way perfect;" and our way will be made perfect, if we walk in His perfect way.

The 7th chapter details disobedience to the commandment of the Captain, and consequent failure, in the matter of the sin of Achan, and then going up to Ai with this sin amongst them unjudged; and so it will always be. Oh, how Satan in innumerable ways gets the Lord's children away from the clear strait path of obedience to the Lord! Israel would go on in the fight; and God, so to speak, said, "Go on! but I am not with you;" and so there was discomfiture. Try again. No! Joshua is down on his face. He did not count upon defeat. I fear some of us do not count upon victory. What shall the people of the land say? Israel to turn their backs on their foes! And for a child of God to be defeated is not a thing we should look for, for God is stronger than His foes. What is to be done? Get internally right before you assume the offensive.

It would be a blessed thing for individual Christians and gatherings to stand still to enquire, and see if the Lord was with them. To say, I have not the presence of the Lord in power with me shows that there is something wrong. God is a God of light and holiness, and He will not prosper the soul that sinneth. In order to conquest and victory, there must be cleanness. We shall learn in the clear light of God's judgment what a solemn thing sin is. Clear out the sin; that done, God smiles upon His people, and Ai is taken.

We see in the 9th chapter, how Joshua and the men of Israel fell into a snare, because they did not ask counsel of the Lord. We see in the 6th chapter, that obedience to the Captain's commands gives success. In the 7th chapter, the result of disobedience to the

Captain's command is discomfiture; and in the 9th chapter, we see the consequence of not consulting the Captain—they fall into a snare.

Now may the Lord bless His own truth to us, and make it a principle in our lives, to do nothing, and to go nowhere, but as we are led by our Captain.

"UNDER THE SUN."

THE BANKRUPTCY OF HUMAN NATURE.

THE VOICE OF THE WORD.

"**V**ERILY every man at his best state is altogether vanity." Psalm xxxix. 5. "What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun? One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose. The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually; and the wind returneth again according to his circuits. All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full: unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again. All things are full of labour; man cannot alter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing." Eccles. 1. 3-8.

THE VOICES OF THE WORLD.

"The world abounds with wonders, and also with victims. In man is more wretchedness than in all other animals put together. Man loves life, yet he knows he must die; spends his existence in diffusing the miseries which he has suffered—cutting the throats of his fellow-creatures for pay—cheating and being cheated. The bulk of mankind are nothing more than a crowd of wretches—equally criminal—equally unfortunate. I wish I had never been born."—*Voltaire*.

"I seem affrighted and confounded with the solitude in which I am placed by my philosophy. When I look abroad, on every side I see dispute, contradiction, and distraction. When I turn my eye inward, I find nothing but doubt and ignorance. Where am I? From what cause do I derive my existence? To what condition shall I return? I am confounded with these questions. I begin to fancy myself in a most deplorable condition—enviored with the deepest darkness on every side."—*Hume*.

"I have been under the powers and influence of all

the pleasures of this world, and consequently know their futility, and do not regret their loss. I appraise them at their real value, which, in truth, is very low. I look upon all that is past as one of those romantic dreams that opium commonly occasions, and I do by no means desire to repeat the nauseous dose for the sake of the fugitive dream."—*Chesterfield*.

"Oh man! thou feeble tenant of an hour,
Debased by slavery, or corrupt by power,
Who knows thee well must quit thee with disgust,
Degraded mass of animated dust!
Thy love is lust, thy friendship all a cheat,
Thy smiles, hypocrisy, thy words, deceit.
By nature vile, ennobled but by name,
Each kindred brute might bid thee blush for shame."
—*Byron*.

"There is something in the unselfish and self-sacrificing love of a *brute*, which goes directly to the heart of him who has had frequent occasion to test the paltry friendship and gossamer fidelity of MERE MAN."
—*Edgar Allan Poe*.

"Oppress'd with grief, oppress'd with care,
A burden more than I can bear,
I set me down and sigh:
Oh life! thou art a galling load,
Along a rough, a weary road,
To wretches such as I!"—*Robert Burns*.

"All things are touched with melancholy."—

"Even the bright extremes of joy
Bring on conclusions of disgust,
Like the sweet blossoms of the May,
Whose fragrance ends in must."

Thus wrote *Tom Hood*, the "*Humourist*," (!)—a man whose employment it was to provoke that "laughter" which the wise man so fitly compared to the "crackling of thorns under a pot." We have seen the likeness, taken by God's own photography, of all that is in the world. A black picture and a strange one—the life experience of him who, of all men, had amplest opportunity to learn and to enjoy whatever man may desire of "all that is before him." Solomon could say with fullest meaning, "Behold, that which *I have seen*;" and the book of *Ecclesiastes* lets us see what it amounted to. Now, "What can the man do that cometh after the king?" Nearly three thousand years have elapsed since this dreary "full-length" picture of humanity was exposed. During all that

time, man's deepest thought has been "Progress;" his loudest cry, "Forward!" In that time, man's *power* has laid hold of the scattered tribes of earth, and welded them into mighty empires—his *science* has sought to "understand all mysteries," till, in its presumptuous pride, it has shut out the Creator from the world His hand has made—while his *religion* has captivated the finest intellects with its "theologies," and glutted to satiety the "lust of the eye," with marvels of architecture, richest colour in painting and stained glass, thunder of organ-music, and priests clothed in "purple and fine linen." Here, far on in the boastful, nineteenth century, we hold in our hand the truthful, *because voluntary*, confessions of those who have sought the phantom of "the greatest good" by widely different means—of those who have given their hearts to know wisdom, and of those who have sought to know madness and folly. What do those confessions prove? That God's picture was true *in its every lineament*. Truly that picture is a "Nocturne," and those voices are "voices of the night." Oh, "horror of great darkness" had God left us thus, and had no other Voice come in!

THE VOICE OF THE BELOVED.

How fully it came to us in our deepest need—meeting that need in its heart-weariness and craving thirst. *Matt. xi. 28; John vii. 37.* "While we were yet a great way off" from God, hurrying hellward on the broad road, we heard Him say, "I am THE WAY;" thus blessedly recognising that we were wandering ones, and lovingly winning us to "turn our feet" (*Psalms cxix. 50*) towards Himself. While we were wholly given over to the "traditions of men," or, it may be, "our own opinions"—God not in all our thoughts—He announced Himself as THE TRUTH. When we were "dead in sins," He said, "I am THE LIFE;" and the Holy Ghost let us see ourselves "quickened together with Him," and "raised together," and "seated together in the Heavens in Him."

"Under the sun" all is confusion, falsehood, death. He who came from above and beyond the sun was in Himself "the light" and "the life." "This age," and all that pertain to it, are "not of the Father." "He gave Himself,—that He might deliver us from the evil age which has set in." All below is emptiness—"vanity of vanities." "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." "We are complete in Him."

Alleluiah! We do no more here than call attention to His voice, as the "Shepherd of the sheep," John x. 3, leading them out; or to the tender "knocking" with His voice, Cant. v. 2, as our kinsman-lover, calling to most intimate communion with Himself.

Our desire in this paper, is, that God's dear children may be led to more adoring gratitude as we view again the hole of the pit whence we were digged; also, that we may see what is "under the sun" *as God sees it*. Oh the grace of God, who "so loved" that "He gave"! Oh the abyssmal depth from which we have been saved! Our citizenship is not here, but in Heaven; we look for the City which "*hath no need of the sun*;" we await His Coming, when we shall "see His face" and be "satisfied," (literally, "*full*"). Ps. xvii. 15.

"Every man that hath this hope *in Him* purifieth himself, even as He is pure." A. P. M.

DEACONS.

A LETTER IN REPLY TO QUERIES.

I THINK the real meaning of the word "diakonos," and the way in which it is used in the New Testament, are essential points in attempting to answer your questions. There is no thought of anything official about the word, and while persons holding a defined position as to some particular duty would be included among "diakonos," so would equally all who served the Church in any entirely unofficial way. In the only three places where the word is translated "deacon" in the authorised version, Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. 3, 8, 12, there is no definite article in the Greek, which greatly alters the character of the passages.

I enclose a list of all the places where the word "diakonos" occurs, variously translated in the English, and have italicised the word in each case to distinguish it. You no doubt know that the pretentious expression, "They that have used the office of a deacon well," 1 Tim. iii. 13, is simply "they that have served well." I would, therefore, never use the word "deacon" as a distinctive term. It is merely an attempt to give an official character to service for Christ in the Church, and is made to serve man's purpose in that way. The "servant" is quite sufficient, and even with that, the Holy Spirit avoids the use of a definite article that would have given the smallest countenance to man's love of the official.

Now, as to your questions—

First. I do not think that any authority, expressed definitely in Titus or implied in 1 Tim., as to appointing persons to a special charge, holds good to any but those to whom it was addressed. Moreover, such charge only related to appointing elders, and not to other kinds of service.

Second. I see no warrant for anybody to elect or appoint "deacons." The Church at Jerusalem was instructed to look out seven men of good report, and full of the Holy Ghost, and wisdom, whom the Apostles would appoint to look after financial matters of the Church. These men were not appointed to be "deacons." Doubtless they were "diakonos," or servants, of the Church, by reason of the work entrusted to them; doubtless also, they were servants of the Church quite apart from this particular work, but the appointment was not to be deacons, but to perform a particular service.

The passage you refer to, 1 Tim. iii. 10, teaches that we are only to recognise and acknowledge as servants of the Church those who have been proved as to their godliness in walk and doctrine, but does not suggest any appointment or election.

When persons have to be appointed for such a business as referred to above, Acts vi. 3 shows how completely the instruction of the Apostles agrees with the "let-them-be-proved" of this passage. It is of general application, whether in appointing persons to the charge of money matters and other similar business, or in the recognition of those who have "addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints," 1 Cor. xvi. 15, literally, "*ordained* themselves to the *diakonia* of the saints."

Third. 1 Tim. iii. 11 beyond doubt refers to women serving in the Church. There is no possessive pronoun "their," which would be absolutely necessary to justify the word "wives." Phebe, in Romans xvi. 1, is an example, but we do not need to coin an official title for her, and call her a "deaconess;" the simple word "servant" covers the whole ground.

Fourth. I think the preceding answers show my thoughts as to this question. I find no warrant for appointment, except as to business matters. Those so appointed will be owned with all who truly serve in other capacities—as servants; but anything beyond this, I believe, is only calculated to feed pride.

Fully note, that however humble the service may be,

however apparently unspiritual in its character, the Church may not dispense with the most searching requirements as to personal godliness. How our consciences need thus to be exercised in all wherein we seek to serve our fellow-saints, that our good (literally, "beautiful"), service may gain for us great boldness.

I trust you may find these remarks helpful, and shall be very glad to hear if they agree with what you yourself find in the Word. A. J. H.

DI AKON OS.

- Matt. xx. 26—"Let him be your *minister*."
 — xxii. 13—"Then said the king to the *servants*."
 — xxiii. 11—"He that is greatest among you shall be your *servant*."
 Mark ix. 35—"Servant of all."
 — x. 43—"Shall be your *minister*."
 John ii. 5—"Saith unto the *servants*."
 — ii. 9—"The *servants* which drew the water knew."
 — xii. 26—"There shall also My *servant* be."
 Rom. xiii. 4—"The *minister* of God."
 — xv. 8—"A *minister* of the circumcision."
 — xvi. 1—"Phebe, a *servant* of the Church."
 1 Cor. iii. 5—"Ministers by whom ye believed."
 2 Cor. iii. 6—"Able *ministers* of the New Testament."
 — vi. 4—"As the *ministers* of God."
 — xi. 15—"His *ministers* . . . as the *ministers* of righteousness."
 — xi. 23—"Are they *ministers* of Christ?"
 Gal. ii. 17—"The *minister* of sin."
 Eph. iii. 7—"Whereof I was made a *minister*."
 — vi. 21—"A faithful *minister*."
 Phil. i. 1—"With the bishops and *deacons*."
 Col. i. 7—"A faithful *minister* of God."
 — i. 23—"I, Paul, am made a *minister*."
 — i. 25—"Whereof I . . . *minister*."
 — iv. 7—"A faithful *minister*."
 1 Thess. iii. 2—"Minister of God."
 1 Tim. iii. 8—"Likewise must the *deacons* be grave."
 — iii. 12—"Let the *deacons*," &c.
 — iv. 6—"Thou shalt be a good *minister*."

Note.—It is important to distinguish between the exercise of spiritual gifts and the charge of money or other service in temporal things. It is only in regard to the latter that the Church has power to make choice or nominate. Even in Acts vi., whilst the brethren "looked out" qualified persons, it was the Apostles who "appointed." Any brother might exercise his spiritual functions of whatever kind in any assembly according to his ability, and is only responsible to the Lord to do so, 1 Peter iv. 10; but where the charge of the Church's bounty is concerned, it would be quite out of place for even the most spiritual and respected believer to assume the respon-

sibility of his own accord. Paul had to be "prayed with much entreaty," 2 Cor. viii. 4, to undertake this service. The "brother whose praise was in all the Churches" was "*chosen*" of the Churches to accompany Paul in that service. So also Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, tells them that he would send to Jerusalem with their bounty those whom *they should approve*. See 1 Cor. xvi. 3. The reason being, that in this particular service they were acting as stewards of the Church, and as such were responsible to the Church. —Ed.

UNITED STATES AND CANADA.

MY DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,

KNOWING that you are interested in the progress of the Lord's work in the United States and Canada, I send you a line or two regarding the *Believers' Meetings* which were held in this city on the 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th of January.

I sailed from Liverpool on the 24th December, in the national steamer *Italy*, and after an unusually stormy passage of fifteen days, we reached New York in safety. A brother kindly met me, and conducted me to Mr. Richard Owen's house, whose guest I was during the short time I remained in the city.

I was glad to learn that the few who are gathered in the name of the Lord there, had rented a nice comfortable hall (capable of seating 400 persons), in a populous district. It is situated at corner of 29th Street, and Avenue 9, and is called *The Hudson River Hall*. There are now about forty in fellowship, and at the close of the Gospel Meeting on Lord's-day evening, which was well attended, three young men were baptized.

I left New York on Tuesday evening, and arrived here on Wednesday afternoon. The same night there was a prayer meeting in the Gospel Hall, and a goodly number were present.

On Thursday morning the first meeting of the Conference was held in Larkin Hall. Most of the time from 10 till 12 was spent in prayer and praise. In the afternoon Mr. Donald Ross read the 8th chapter of Romans, and dwelt at considerable length upon the fulness and completeness of the believer's standing in Christ, and His coming again as the hope of the believer. In the evening a Gospel Meeting was held, which was well attended. W. P. Charles and John Knox M'Ewen spoke, and several remained for conversation, who seemed interested about the welfare of their soul.

On Friday morning the attendance was increased by fresh arrivals of brethren and sisters from a distance. After prayer and praise, brother Henry Ironside read 1 Cor. viii. 1-8 and 1 John iii. 1-3 after which he delivered a practical and searching address regarding the inconsistency of Christians professing to believe in the coming of the Lord, and yet living like the world in its ways and customs; professing to believe that unsaved friends and relatives are rushing blindfolded to an eternity of despair, and never warning them personally of their sin and danger.

This address was followed by a brother reading Rev. ii. 1-6. He sought to show that the secret of the worldliness and want of heart for souls was to be traced to the decay of first love to the Lord Jesus. The Ephesian Christians were earnest workers, sound in doctrine and morals, labouring steadily and patiently in the face of great discouragement and difficulties, constrained by a pure motive, but they had left their first love. Their love to Christ was not "abounding," but decreasing, and the Lord could not but be deeply grieved. *Service* could never compensate for lack of love. Many seem to think that as Christians get *older* they should get *colder*. This is a great and a terrible mistake. When love in the heart toward the Lord Himself was displaced by service or doctrines, His coming would be little wished for, and therefore little thought about; and the terrible condition of the unsaved would be but feebly realized. After some earnest words by a young brother, the hymn commencing, "O Lord, Thy love's unbounded" was sung, and this was followed by a soul-stirring address from brother John Smith, on Obedience to the Word.

Friday afternoon.—Brother D. Ross spoke at length on the importance of Meditation and Study of the Scriptures; showed how much they were neglected by Christians, and the writings of man substituted; gave his own experience; and strongly urged on believers to prayerfully, patiently, and perseveringly search and meditate upon the Word, so as to be healthy, happy, hearty Christians. A brother from Toronto directed our attention to Heb. xii. 1-3, after which the meeting was closed by singing the well-known hymn, "Rise up, and hasten my soul, haste along."

The Gospel Meeting at night was well attended, the large hall being comfortably filled, nearly every seat being occupied. Henry Ironside, John Smith, and myself took part.

Saturday morning.—The meeting was commenced by singing, "One there is above all others," after which several brethren led in prayer. Charles Arne and Mr. Fuller having briefly spoken, brother Ironside read Amos iii. 3, and Micah 6-8 (marginal reading). He said, a child of God in order to walk with God must be agreed with God. Our testimony to the world as individuals is a consistent walk. If we walk with God there will be a testimony for God to our fellow-workmen, servants, masters, and families. Num. xix. 11-22 was read, as showing separation from evil. Gal. vi. 1 was also referred to as an exposition of Num. xix. The spiritual are to seek to restore the one who has been overtaken in a fault, and do it in the spirit of meekness. Discipline is the last resort. Luke vii. 36 was also read. We are not altogether debarred from the honour of washing the Master's feet. We have them in the members here, but it is not with *hard water* but with *tears* we should do it. The reason so many of us fail in restoring God's children is because we fail to do it with tears. She wiped them with her hair—a woman's glory, 1 Cor. xi. 15. Let us be willing to wipe the feet of our brethren with our own glory. More of us can use the sword to cut off people's ears (like Peter), than seek to wash each other's feet with tears—in other words, weep over each other's failures. This meeting terminated by singing the hymn, "I'm waiting for Thee, Lord."

Saturday afternoon was devoted to reports and conference as to the Lord's work. Brother Ross gave an account of his labours in the tent in Crown Point and Chicago, with brother James Goodfellow. Numbers professed to be saved in both places, and there are now twenty-five in fellowship in Crown Point, and over forty in Chicago. Mr. Ross and family have removed to Chicago, and the meetings are continued nightly in the Gospel Hall, 97 South Desplaines Street, where brothers John Smith and Henry Ironside are at present preaching.

Mr. T. D. W. Muir, who had charge of the tent in Canada, told of his labours in Toronto and Brantford, and stated that there had been considerable blessing. Mr. John Grimason spoke of gospel efforts at various places, in which God had been working. Mr. Manners referred to a remarkable awakening at Hollandland, where many had professed conversion, and in less than twelve months over ninety were received into fellowship. Mr. W. P. Charles spoke of work in Bay City,

Michigan, and Detroit. Some time was spent in conversation about arrangements for gospel work in tents during the coming summer, and it was agreed that at least another tent should be obtained for the city of New York.

Saturday evening meeting was for Christians, and was largely attended. Mr. John M'Ewan spoke from Eph. vi. 18, and Col. iv. 6. Mr. John Smith on Following the Lord, and Mr. Ross on Fellowship.

On Lord's-day morning about 250 remembered the Lord Jesus in the breaking of bread in Larkin Hall. It was truly a refreshing season, and the Master's presence was realized. In the afternoon Messrs. Ross, Smith, and Martin spoke with power to the hearts and consciences of all present. In the evening Larkin Hall was crowded, and an overflow meeting was held in the Gospel Hall. Several brethren preached the gospel in both places. Numbers remained who seemed anxious to be saved, and some professed to know Jesus as their Saviour.

A meeting for prayer was held on *Monday morning* in the Gospel Hall, when labourers in the harvest-field were commended to the Lord, and earnest petitions presented that He would *raise up and thrust forth* into the United States and Canada those whom He has fitted for teaching and preaching.

At the close of the meeting there was a general break up, some going to the States, and others to Canada, one brother having a journey before him of 900 miles.

Every fresh Conference in this city must become more and more important. The vastness of the coun-

try, the number of emigrants that are yearly pouring into it, the gospel work being carried on, the numbers being saved, the new assemblies being formed, the general ignorance of Scripture, and the desire of many to be better acquainted with it, gives such a gathering a most important *niche* in the believers' meetings that are held throughout the world.

Brother Rice Hopkin's visit was much appreciated last year, and numbers were disappointed at not seeing him again. I earnestly hope and pray that some of the Lord's ministering servants will feel led by Him to attend the next Believers' Conference here, if the Lord delay His coming. You will be glad to learn that brother Donald Munro is greatly improved in health since he went to the Hygienic Institute, at Dansville, and it is expected that in a short time he will be able to preach again. He, and brother John Smith have been much owned of God in breaking up fresh ground. The Lord raise up hundreds of such labourers!

Since the Conference has closed I have, in company with brother Thomas Muir, been preaching the gospel in this city—on week evenings in the Gospel Hall, and on Lord's-day in the Larkin Hall. On Lord's-day evening last the large hall was crowded in every part. Some professed conversion. The weather is very fine, and every evening in the open air we get numbers to listen, and afterwards adjourn to the hall, which is usually filled.

Pray, and ask others to pray for Canada and the United States.
Yours affectionately,
ALEXANDER MARSHALL.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

QUESTION NO. V.

Are the stars of Rev. i. and ii. symbolical of those who rule in the assemblies? If so, does not this support the universal theory that only one man should be the responsible head (as acting under Christ) in each local gathering? They are called "angels," but only one representing each assembly. John was told to write to the angel of the church in ———

REPLY.

The vision of Rev. i. verse 12 to the end, is purely symbolical in character, and the seven stars and seven

golden candlesticks are said to be a mystery (verse 20). The number seven, whether applied to the stars or the candlesticks, cannot be supposed to limit the number of the things represented, but rather to speak of the whole complete thing. Thus the seven candlesticks, figuring the seven churches of Asia, stand as the symbol of the whole professing church, while the seven stars will equally represent the whole power for ministry in the church.

In this vision we see the Lord Jesus in His true relationship to His church on earth. He is in the

midst, and He holds the stars in His right hand, implying that He entirely controls them, and that the ministry of which they are the sign does not divert His people's attention from Himself, but fixes it upon Him.

But in the 20th verse we get a change in the character of this ministry, for in passing from the vision of what should be to the reality of what is, we are told that the seven stars are the angels (messengers) of the seven churches. Now the thought of a messenger involves distance, and at once indicates that the saints are not directly looking to, and dependent upon, the Lord Himself. The reason of this may be found in the one grave charge against the church at Ephesus—"Thou hast left thy first love"—the root of all the failure and disobedience subsequently developed.

The words descriptive of Himself with which the Lord commences His address to each church are chosen as affording a corrective for that church's special failure, or a help for their special need. Hence the church at Ephesus is reminded that Jesus holds the stars in His right hand, and walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.

The one angel of each church no more implies that there was one man as the responsible head than the seven stars in Christ's right hand teach that there were but seven such men in all, or the seven candlesticks that there were but seven such assemblies in Christendom.

A theory, however universally held, which has not a shadow of direct Scripture warrant, cannot possibly be maintained by the interpretation of a symbol, and indeed the symbol in this case gives no countenance to the theory, for the stars first and the angels afterwards represent, not individuals, but ministry, whether exercised by many or few.

Reference to Acts xx. 17, where the church at Ephesus, at a much earlier period, had many elders whom the Holy Ghost had made overseers, to feed the flock, as also to 1 Thess. v. 12, 13; Heb. xiii. 17; 1 Peter v. 1-5; Acts xiv. 23; and Titus i. 5, will abundantly show what God's way is as against man's theory.

QUESTION NO. VI.

Should a Christian belong to the Evangelical Alliance, or to the Young Men's Christian Association, or to any other religious association?

REPLY.

The religious associations named in this question and many others devised by man are for the most part the offspring of gracious desires in the souls of Christian men.

But whether the object be the uniting of the divided family of God or the salvation and blessing of young men, God has appointed ONE ASSOCIATION equal to effect these ends and all other ends which God has in view in this world. That is THE CHURCH.

Did Christians but subject themselves to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ and to His written Word, then would they be drawn together on a heavenly and eternal footing; into one true divine Evangelical Alliance; into one divine Missionary Society; and into one grand divine association including every Christian young man.

But this involves the surrender of time-honoured traditions, of creeds and confessions, of doctrines and commandments of men, of sectarianism and self-will, all of which are dear as life to the pride of the carnal mind, and a simple appeal to "GOD AND HIS WORD."

Hence it is that such associations are devised and formed and gloried in. They offer to unite Christians in one without laying the axe to the root of insubjection to the Head of the Church, which sin has caused all the divisions and all the inefficiency of the Church as God's ONE WITNESS on earth during the absence of Christ. In principle, every such association is virtually a surrender of all that God has revealed concerning the calling, the construction, the order and the testimony of the Church. It is in effect saying that God's principles of association are a failure, and man has found out a more excellent way. If this be so, how then can one whose eyes are open to these truths be a member of such associations?

QUESTION NO. VII.

Should the meetings of any such associations be given out in the assembly of Christians gathered to the Name of the Lord?

REPLY.

The answer to Question No. VI. is almost of itself a sufficient reply to this. Surely it could not be for the glory of God to intimate in the assembly of His saints the meetings of associations that are so utterly false in principle. If mentioned at all, ought it to be for any purpose other than to show how contrary they are to the revealed will of God?

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- No. 3.—Hi, Where are you Going? That's my Business.
- No. 4.—"Whosoever" means "Anyone"; or, The Farm Labourer, &c.
- No. 5.—"Warned of God"; or, "Flee from the Wrath to Come."
(Lessons drawn from the Tay Bridge Disaster).
- No. 6.—The Condemned Cell.
- No. 7.—The Soul's Wages.
- No. 8.—Is a Fellow to have no Pleasure?

THE WOODCUTS ARE NEW, AND ARE FULL SIZE.

THE NORTHERN WITNESS

LONDON

JAMES E. HAWKINS,
12 Paternoster Sq., E.C.,
and 36 Baker Street, W.

APRIL,
1880.

GLASGOW

GEO. TURNER & Co.,
40 Sauchiehall Street.

THE MYSTERIES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

PART I.

"It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matt. xiii. 11).

THE Scriptural sense of the word "mystery" is, something hidden, kept secret or veiled, and therefore not discoverable by the natural man, or by mere reason. In proof of this, I would quote Romans xvi. 25: "According to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, *but now is made manifest.*" And, again, in 1 Cor. ii. 7, "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, . . . which none of the princes of this world knew; . . . but, as it is written, Eye hath not seen, &c., . . . *but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.*"

To understand or know a mystery, therefore, implies, first, that God has by His Spirit revealed or manifested it in the Scriptures; and, secondly, that we have the spiritual understanding—the God-given capacity to know it. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," 1 Cor. ii. 14.

But if God has given to us a revelation of mysteries in His Word, and if He has also, by His Holy indwelling Spirit, given to us the capacity to understand and enter into that which He has revealed, surely then it is for His glory and for our profit that we seek in all humility to comprehend what He has written for our instruction concerning those things

which are incomprehensible to the carnal mind.

I think it will be abundantly proved, as we proceed, that it is especially in this present age that the eternal purposes of God concerning His dear Son assume the character of mysteries.

The Old Testament is full of prophetic declarations concerning the sufferings and glory, the humiliation, and coming Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The scattering of Israel, and their being gathered again, and the outflow through restored Israel of blessing to the ends of the earth, are also subjects abundantly spoken of in the Old Testament Scriptures. These things are plain and unmistakable, and are not spoken of as mysteries.

But in the course of their fulfilment there has been a sudden breaking off. The line of prophecy can be distinctly traced down to the rejection of Christ. His death, resurrection, and ascension, are plainly foretold; but from that till the time immediately preceding His coming again in glory with His saints, that is to say, during the whole period of the Church's history upon earth, I venture to say, prophetic details are not found in the Old Testament.

It may be gathered from such Scriptures as Hosea iii. 4, 5, that there is an indefinite period intervening, during which Israel nationally is not recognised by Jehovah; but that which God had determined to accomplish during the time of Israel's dispersion is not foretold. Whilst here stating that God's purpose concerning the Church is not *foretold* or *prophesied* of in the Old Testament, I would observe, that in type and shadow it is very frequently to be found; showing to us who have now the enlightenment of the Holy

Spirit, that God had it in His heart—a cherished purpose from the first—but kept it secret until the time of its fulfilment.

The revelation of God's purpose to gather out from Jew and Gentile an elect people, destined to share the heavenly glory of Christ, and to reign with Him in His Kingdom, is reserved for the New Testament.

The special character of this stupendous work of grace is indeed a mystery, as we shall have occasion to see more fully hereafter.

But what I desire now to notice, is the form that the Kingdom of Heaven assumes during this period, and the mysteries connected therewith, which Christ Himself foretels in parables, and then explains in the thirteenth of Matthew.

The first proclamation of the Kingdom of Heaven being at hand, was by John the Baptist, see Matt. iii. 1. The term, "Kingdom of Heaven," would not be unfamiliar to Jewish ears. At once they would remember the prophecy of Daniel: "In the days of those kings shall the God of Heaven set up a Kingdom," Dan. ii. 44.

That Messiah when He came was to be a King—that He should inherit the throne of David, and reign in righteousness, was familiar truth even to the religious formalists of that day. They were ignorant, indeed, of the sufferings that were to precede Messiah's glorious reign; but well they knew that if the Kingdom of God and of Heaven was really at hand, as spoken of by the prophets, it meant destruction to that evil generation.

At first, this preaching of the Kingdom of Heaven by John produced a profound impression upon the nation. High and low, rich and poor, religious and profane, sincere and hypocritical, flocked to his baptism. "Prepare to meet Thy God," had sounded in their ears, and thundered its echoes in their guilty consciences.

Nor was the sensation thus produced allowed to die away. The ministry of John was immediately succeeded by that of the Lord Himself and His disciples. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," Matt. iv. 17. And not only so, but as He went about and taught in their synagogues, preaching "the glad news of the Kingdom," He also "healed all manner of sicknesses, and all manner of disease among the people." See Matt. iv. 23-25.

Thus was He borne witness to by God, among them the "wonders, miracles, and signs," which God did by Him, being His Divine credentials. See Acts ii. 22.

Many owned Him as the Christ. At one time the multitude wished to make Him a king, little knowing what judgment it would have brought down upon them, had His Kingdom then begun. John vi. 14, 15. The children owned Him, and cried, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" The common people heard Him gladly. But the NATION, as such, utterly rejected Him. The elders, scribes, chief priests, rulers, pharisees, sadducees, all as one man combined to murder Him; and this hatred had so far developed itself at the period reached in Matthew xii., that His miraculous works, although they could not gainsay the facts, were by them attributed to the power of Satan, and not to the power of God. These stupendous acts of grace, by which the Lord of life and glory was rescuing guilty fallen man from Satan's grasp, instead of being owned as ample attestation that He was the Messiah, the Sent One of God, were taken to prove that He was an emissary of the devil! Such is man!

It is at this point that the Lord assumes a new attitude towards the nation. In chap. xiii. He begins to speak in parables, and gives as His reason for doing so, that the fulfilment of that terrible passage in Isa. vi. had at length arrived. Read Matt. xiii. 13-15.

This exactly corresponds with a similar passage in the Gospel by John. "These things spake Jesus, and departed, and *did hide Himself from them*; but though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not in Him." Then is quoted the same Scripture from Isaiah, showing that by hiding Himself from them, and hiding also His teaching under the veil of parable, He was recognising that the time of their merciful visitation, as far as the nation was concerned, was at an end. Its doom was sealed. Jerusalem is to be besieged, the temple burned, the land desolated for a period—the duration of which is nowhere foretold.

God's King being thus rejected, His Kingdom, in its public, manifested, literal character, has been postponed. I say postponed, for it is a most serious mistake to suppose that God's purpose has been frustrated, or that the prophecies of Christ's Kingdom and glory, with which the Old Testament abounds, will ultimately fail of entire and literal fulfilment.

Before the Lord's ascension His disciples enquired,

"Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Now, mark His answer. He does not say that the Kingdom will never be restored to Israel; He fully allows their thought, only sets them right as to the immediate expectation of it, telling them that it is not for them to know the times and the seasons; but that, in the meantime, the event which they were to wait for, and which, indeed, was to characterise the period of His absence in heaven, was the descent of the Holy Spirit.

This exactly corresponds with another occasion on which He corrected their thought "that the Kingdom of God should *immediately* appear." See Luke xix. 11, &c. He there, by means of a most lucid parable, shows plainly that He was to go away; that during His absence He should be rebelled against by His citizens; that He should have, meantime, patient, faithful servants, with hearts true to Him, as well as hypocritical ones; that at a fixed time, having been invested with kingly authority, He was to return again, and reward His servants, and execute judgment on His enemies and the hypocrites together.

From this it is evident, to any unprejudiced mind, that the manifestation of the Kingdom of God was not set aside, but deferred. Another Scripture often misconstrued and brought forward to prove that the Kingdom of God in manifested glory is not to be looked for, is Luke xvii. 20, &c. Asked by the pharisees when the Kingdom of God should come, He answered them, "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they say, Lo, here, or Lo, there, for the Kingdom of God is already in the midst of you." I here quote from Alford, as giving the true sense. The Lord was not addressing disciples, but pharisees, hence He could not mean that the Kingdom of God, in a spiritual sense—that is, "Righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," Rom. xiv. 17,—was in their hearts. Neither did He mean to teach them that there never would be a manifested Kingdom of God, for He goes on to say, "As the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven: so shall also the Son of Man be in His day."

His real object was to teach them that the Kingdom of God, with all its gracious powers, was already, in the person of the King, in their midst, unrecognised and scorned; and that in no other form but that of lowly grace would it be found, until the coming

of the Son of Man, as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Many other scriptures might be adduced to prove this, but meantime these may suffice, and, as we proceed, this will become the more obvious.

The question we now come to is, What form does the Kingdom of God (or of Heaven) assume in the meantime, during the period of the rejected King's absence in Heaven? And, closely connected with this, What is God specially accomplishing in this parenthetic period, whilst the line of prophetic accomplishment is suspended, and Israel as a nation cast out?

The thirteenth of Matthew answers to a great extent both questions.

The Kingdom assumes a form of Mystery. That is to say, it is hidden, veiled, different altogether from all human conceptions of a kingdom. It is the Kingdom of Heaven, and yet it is a scene of opposing forces; light and darkness, truth and error, God and Satan, are at work. From first to last it is a sphere of deadly conflict. It exists on the earth, but in this form it is not found in prophetic Scriptures; it is unrevealed till the Lord Himself, in these seven precious parables, uttered "things that had been kept secret from the foundation of the world." Matt. xiii. 35.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

CAMBERWELL, LONDON, Feb. 9, 1880.

BELOVED Mr. —

I ASSERT that the apostle Paul never wrote such a Scripture as that which in your paper and continually is attributed to him. He never penned such language as, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." For, please look at the marginal reading here; and that correction in the margin is undoubtedly the true one in this place. This every Greek scholar will at once admit. So the passage should be rendered:—"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption." Now, at first sight the alteration may appear to be unnecessary, because habit predisposes us to the misquotation; or again, it may appear to be only of secondary importance. But I beg to submit, that the alteration in the reading, which accuracy itself demands, exactly and totally changes the teaching of the passage. For, if it be read, "in sincerity," then the idea constantly inculcated thence

is, that whatever iniquity a man, who may even be preaching Christ, allows himself to be connected with, still in the main he may be an upright man. On the other hand, if the reading should be, as most certainly it should, "in incorruption," then the idea is, that as accomplice in evil, and it may be profiting by that evil, such an one is not upright. Hence, I repeat, that the marginal alteration, and that in accordance with the Greek, is a radical change in the drift of the passage.

Further, a moment's reflection will suffice to show to those who do not know Greek that the marginal reading must be the correct one here. For the rendering in the authorized version constitutes us judges of other people's hearts, whilst the reading in the margin simply holds us responsible to judge their ways and their fruits. Matt. vii. 20. Then as our proclivities tend to make us biassed towards such and such, so we judge their hearts very favourably, whatever iniquity they may be connected with: conversely, "love in incorruption," or as John puts it, "love in the truth," then it is easy for us, if we are faithful to our God, to judge as to what is right and what is wrong; and whilst leaving all hearts to be only discerned by the Searcher of hearts, yet to judge men's lives as we ought to do. Specially ought we to judge the lives of those with whom in holy things we fraternize.

Now, dear sir, compare this teaching with another Scripture. As I have largely proved in my published *Lectures on John*, his third epistle, brief as it is, has a peculiar bearing on the very last days—those in which it has pleased God our lot should be cast, and our witness and service for Him rendered. But in that epistle we are furnished with two distinct marks by the Spirit as to whom the Lord would have us receive. These two marks are (1), Those who have come out (*exellthon*) for the Name; and again (2), Those who take nothing of the Gentiles.

But I understand from your paper that if preachers are reputedly blessed to souls, then whether they are clergymen or dissenting ministers, such will be invited to preach from your platform. But as the old saying puts it excellently well, "Whatever includes excludes." This being the case, surely these two marks impliedly rail off those whom He would have us hold aloof from. Have clergymen as such come out for the Name? Do they take nothing from the Gentiles—from the unconverted world? Do dissenting ministers by their pew

rents, and by their jumble of the living with the dead in worship, and in half-a-dozen other ways—do these take nothing of the Gentiles? Candour, dear sir, will I think constrain you to own, that to ask these questions is alas! to answer them. Then you have the Lord's own judgment as to your paper. We must feel that such persist in justifying themselves in their being confederates with the corruption of their sects. But the word is, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ *in incorruption*."

The actual purport of the inspired word is to put us on our guard against those who conjoin Christ's holy name and cause with evil; or rather, to encourage us to draw towards those who stand fast for the separation of these two diametrically opposite lines of things. As to evil in itself God patiently bears with it. But to associate His name and His cause therewith is quite another thing—is abomination in His eyes. So likewise, in Rev. iii. 15–17, where we have furnished to us another inspired picture of the time of the end, as I have proved in my *Javelin of Phinehas*, the Lord avows that He would Laodicea were either cold or hot, and that what He abhors is the *conjunction* of these two. For such is the true import of this exclamation, "I would thou wert either cold or hot." It is not designed to urge us to exhibit zeal in general, but to the being careful to keep His name quite apart from all complicity with that which is abhorrent to His nature.

Now, beloved sir, I beseech you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us—Oh! affecting display of love indeed—ponder these things. "Those that have the form of godliness, but deny the power thereof, from such also (so Greek) turn away." Heartily do I rejoice that you and the other elder brethren at ——— purpose to keep out of all sect and party. All the sides of Brethrenism have their respective evils, as well as their several phases of the truth. Well, therefore, that each Assembly should act on its own responsibility direct to the Lord, and begin with Himself and with His Word for itself. And He indeed has spoken out both as to what is true and what is false generally, and even, in His grace, has warned us of the peculiar perils of the last days.

I know well from my own experience, and the work here, somewhat of the difficulty of obtaining preachers of the right stamp. In all cases four things are requisite: (1), That the preacher be a Christian him-

self; (2), That he should be a spiritual man; (3), That he should possess spiritual intelligence; (4), That he should be a wise and prudent man. There are four classes of preachers: (1), Bad preachers of a bad gospel; (2), Good preachers of a bad gospel; (3), Bad preachers of a good gospel; (4), Good preachers of a good gospel. But to be in the last category, such must be clean themselves who bear the vessels of the Lord.

Why, your paper, which makes the best to be those reputedly blest to souls, would comprehend women, girls, and even unconverted men. It is recorded in Whitfield's life, that a fool at an inn was once urged to mock that servant of God. So, standing up in the company, he suddenly said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye repent, ye will all be damned." And all present, in number amounting to nine, were converted by the word uttered by that fool.

Once more. Might I ask you, would you have those preachers who have not come out for the Name, and who do take all they can get from the Gentiles—would you consent that such, who were to preach for you in the evening of the Lord's day, should break bread in the Assembly in the morning? and probably even presume to teach the gathered saints?

With much love, I am yours faithfully,

W. LINCOLN.

P. S.—Have you observed the break in the contrast in John's Gospel? chap. iii. 20, 21. The human contrast to the doing evil would be the doing good; and this is the way men talk, saying, "Well, never mind, he's doing good!" But that is only man's estimate, comparing himself with his fellow-man. On the other hand, "He that doeth *truth*," forms his estimate of himself from God. The light lays a man open to himself and open before God.

THE Christian expects his reward not as due to merit, but as connected, in a constitution of grace, with those acts which grace enables him to perform. The pilgrim who has been led to the gate of heaven, will not knock there as worthy of being admitted, but the gate shall open to him because he is brought thither. He who sows, even *with tears*, the *precious seed* of faith, hope, and love, shall *doubtless come again with joy, and bring his sheaves with him*; because it is in the very nature of that seed to yield, under the kindly influence secured to it, a joyful harvest.

DAVID.

A HITHOPHEL'S counsel having been rejected, that of Hushai was followed by Absalom, and he took the field with Israel against his father David.

Absalom had been allowed by Jehovah to make his way by flattery and deceit, but now we shall see that avowed antagonism, open warfare met with its proper correction.

Viewed from a human standpoint, the contest was between father and son, but others were behind them, the real contest was between Satan and Jehovah, for the throne of Israel, which should have it—Satan for Absalom, his man, or Jehovah for David, His man.

The Antichrist, the Man of Sin, Satan's agent on the earth, will be suffered by God to make his way by deceit and flattery for the first half-week—forty and two months, twelve hundred and sixty days, a time times and half a time—but when he shall throw off the mask, break his covenant with Jews and others, put down sacrifice, and set himself up as God, God will send His Man from heaven to smite his kingdom with plagues, dethrone him, casting him and his prophet alive into the abyss.

David prepared for the battle, and for leading his army, but the people's wish to the contrary ruled the king, and he sat in the gate to succour them out of the city. The battle commenced, Israel was defeated, Absalom fled, and in his flight met with his death, not transfixed to a cross by human hands, but by the judgment of Jehovah hanging from a tree, where Joab took his life.

Thus Jehovah interposed to maintain the honour of His name and of His law, to secure the throne and crown to His chosen king, by judging the rebellious son, the murderer and usurper.

Messengers, one deputed by his captain, and the other by permission, ran with tidings to the king, the father.

Heavy tidings, indeed, were they for David; it was a dispensation to which he did not at once bow, as his tears, but especially his lamentation, proved: "O Absalom, my son, my son! would God I had died for thee."

When Jehovah judged Aaron's sons for their sin, the father opened not his mouth, his silence justified God; and when the child Samuel had delivered his

heavy message against Eli's house, Eli said, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good," but David was not quite ready for this.

It is difficult, dear fellow-Christian—is it not?—indeed only possible to faith, to forget ourselves as husbands, fathers, or children, as may be—to act as men of God before Him—not to know as hindrances the relationships of life, the claims of nature, when the claims of God, and the honour of His Name and Word are to be met and maintained.

David retired weeping, as if disposed to sink under his sorrow, indifferent to the throne, the crown, and also his subjects, who had jeopardized their lives for him. Surely this was, though indirectly, casting reflection on that which Jehovah had done.

Even Joab seems so to have understood his conduct, and aroused him to his duty. Hear his words: "Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and of thy daughters, the lives of thy wives and thy concubines, in that thou lovest thine enemies and hatest thy friends; for this day, I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well. Now, therefore, arise and speak comfortably unto thy servants." "Then the king arose, and sat in the gate."

The men of Israel consulted to welcome David back, and the men of Judah, bowed in heart by the king's message, also invited him and his to return. "David returned, and came to Jordan." Judah came to Gilgal to meet the king, and conduct him over Jordan; they took precedence on the ground of kinsmanship; and when the men of Israel complained of it to David, the men of Judah justified their conduct on that ground, saying, "Because the king is *near of kin* to us;" and these few words were fiercer than all those of Israel.

Dear reader, remember the blessedness, the honour, of union with Christ; of being members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Ask, and expect accordingly; for He who died to make us His, lives to nourish and to cherish us. Let your actions also testify that you believe it.

David's return must have been an affecting scene, and one circumstance stands out in bold relief to render it such. The prostrate Benjamite, Shimei, had hastened to fall at David's feet confessing his sin, and begging for his life at the hand of the king, whom just before he had cursed and stoned.

Those surrounding David would have avenged the wrong, but the king, who had patiently, because believingly, endured the cursing, forgave him.

Equally affecting, if not more so, was the next recorded meeting between Mephibosheth and the king. That loyal-hearted but slandered and injured pensioner came to meet David; he had neither dressed his feet, trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed; his grief had rendered him forgetful or indifferent both of comfort and appearance; he would not be comforted because David was not. To Mephibosheth the presence of David gave life, spirit and sweetness to all besides—without him all was nothing.

Dear fellow-believer, and is not the presence, the enjoyed presence of Christ, the life of our life—His loving-kindness better than life? It imparts brightness, sweetness, and joy to all besides. Without this what is all else? Then cleave to Him, abide in Him, heed His Word, so shall His joy *in you* continue, and your joy be full.

They met, and David broke the silence by a question; we are not told what effect Mephibosheth's appearance had on him, but he questioned him: "Why wentest thou not with me, Mephibosheth?" To this Mephibosheth gave just the answer we might have expected from a simple loving loyal heart; he spoke the truth: "My lord, O king, my servant deceived me; for I said, I will saddle me an ass and go unto the king, because thy servant is lame, but he (Ziba) hath slandered thy servant." Yes! Ziba had grievously slandered him; and what was still worse, David had, without inquiry and proof, accepted it, and acted on it, giving all that pertained to Mephibosheth to his servant.

If Mephibosheth's appearance had not touched David's conscience, his words had undeceived him, convinced him of Mephibosheth's loyalty and unaltered affection; of Ziba's lies and covetousness; and surely of his own rash judgment and ungenerous act.

I notice this, not so much for the sake of finding fault with David, as for our own profit, dear reader. Rash judgment—accepting a charge without proof against another is so easily and so frequently practised, that we need to see clearly the evil of it, and be on our guard against it.

Our David (Beloved) never accepts a slander against us, nor against any. He could not of course be deceived by appearances, by a false charge. Even those

made by Satan, too true to be denied, He answers before God, while God as a Father chastens us for them. We should imitate Him in the first, nor think of accepting a charge against any without proof.

David made his proposal to Mephibosheth, saying, "Speak no more of thy matters; I have said, thou and Ziba divide the land." This unworthy speech drew from Mephibosheth the true feelings of his heart towards David, and his joy at his return. "Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as the king hath returned to his house in peace."

David and his welfare was everything to Mephibosheth; neither lands, silver nor gold, were to be compared with the presence of the king.

Person is the life and joy of possession.

The king's next interview was with Barzillai, the aged, wealthy, and generous Gileadite, who had nourished him and his house all the time he lay in Mahanaim. David's grateful heart moved him to make proposal of kindness, to spend the rest of his life with him in Jerusalem. Barzillai respectfully declined it, pleading the infirmities of age—his taste had failed, also his hearing; in short, he had realized the Divine appointment, that man, as man, should outlive the pleasure of living. See Eccles. xii. 1-7. Moreover, he preferred his own locality to Jerusalem, and craved to lie in a grave beside his father and his mother. Although he declined for himself, he offers his son as David's servant: "Let Chimham go over with the king, and do to him what seemeth good unto thee." David accepted the offer, saying, "Chimham shall go with me, and I will do what seemeth good unto thee, and whatsoever thou requestest that will I do for thee." Thus closed their interview, and David gave Barzillai the seal of gratitude, the parting kiss and blessing. The loved, aged father, returned, and Chimham went on with David to Gilgal as his servant.

The king returned, all the men of Judah and half those of Israel having conducted him over Jordan.

The struggle with Absalom had ceased, but the sword of chastisement had not been sheathed, and David again felt its point. Among the Israelites who strove with the men of Judah for anticipating them in bringing back the king was a Benjamite, named Bichri, who blew a trumpet, and said, "We have no part in David, nor portion in the son of Jesse; every man to his tent, O Israel." A faction was immediately made, and Bichri and his followers fled. H. H.

NOTES ON EZEKIEL, CHAPTER I.

WHEN things here dry up and become barren, God's resources do not fail. Ezekiel was among the captives in Babylon—all was dry and barren about, Psalm cxxxvii., but God showed him His glory. This vision was shown to him on the principle that when earthly resources fail, those of God are opened.

We may trace this throughout all God's ways. In the wilderness, He opened heaven. In Psalm lxi. we have thirsting for *God* in a dry and thirsty land, &c. The vision in the Revelation bears the same character. All on earth was barren to the Apostle when banished to Patmos, but there the mighty power of God was exhibited. If one child of God has more trial than another there is the superabounding power of God to help him, 1 Peter iv. 14.

We also see it in the dispensations. The heavenly dispensation was ushered in when the earthly one failed. It is great power of blessing to the soul to know this principle.

The epistle of Peter occupies the same place in the New Testament, that the prophecy of Ezekiel does in the old—both are addressed to Jews who lost their land. The strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, &c., are as far from their land as the captives in Babylon, and heavenly things are put before both (see 1 Peter i. 4, and the glory in Ezekiel). It is the same glory which is looked at in both, with this difference—that rises *upon* the Jews, while the Church appears *in* it. See Isa. lx. 1; Col. iii. 4. Ezekiel occupies the place of the Jews, while John in the Revelation is in that of the Church—Ezekiel is on earth, and sees the glory in heaven; but John in the 4th chap. of Revelation hears a voice, saying, "Come up hither."

There are two lessons which the children of God have to learn—namely, patient endurance here for a season, and hope for that which is to come hereafter. We get this all through Scripture. Rom. xv. 4-13 connects joy with hope. The glory of God is unaltered and unalterable. It must either destroy or bless, when it is present, and if God would spare an evil thing, He must separate His glory from it, for if His glory were with evil, it must destroy. The same power blesses what is of the Lord, and destroys what is not, as the same fire purifies gold and con-

sumes wood. The Lord must send grace before glory, to fit for it. In Titus ii. "the *grace* of God has appeared," &c., teaching and "looking for the *glorious* appearing."

The glory of God did not cease to be; but on account of the sin of the Jews, it was removed from them to bring in the corrective discipline which was to fit them for it. In the 11th chapter the glory goes away—then the purging process goes on, to prepare the people for its return. While it is absent in heaven, God is gathering out the saints who are to be manifested in it.

The wings of the living creatures are symbolical of heaven; whenever we get wings, we get them connected with heaven. We have here *wheels* also, for all the earth shall be full of the glory of God. The third part of the glory we get in the 26th verse: the likeness of the Man upon the throne. Thus we have three gradations in the glory. The Man on the throne *above* the firmament, which is *above* the heads of the living creatures—for Christ is the Head of all glory: the same Spirit energizes all—all have the same purpose—as we see in the 17th verse. If the *earthly* glory is not manifested, neither is the *heavenly*; and if the heavenly glory is exhibited, so is the earthly also. It is away from the earth now, but it is revealed in the Word, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. How poor does all the glory of Babylon seem after this!

All the little symbols in this chapter have meaning in them. The faces show forth moral power. We all know what is expressed by them; indeed, we have the signification of the lion and eagle shown in 2 Sam. i. 23. Intelligence is shown in the face of the man; the ox has a very blessed meaning—it exhibits the patient activity of domestic labour, "the ox that treadeth out the corn." The hands express activity. The joined wings, oneness of purpose—the Spirit the same in all—no deviation from the *straight path*—no *wilfulness*. The only energizing power amongst them was the Spirit of God; they went only *whither* the Spirit *was to go*. It is the same with the inner man—the desires of the inner man are all pure desires: "I delight in the law of God after the inner man."

In the 16th verse, the description of the wheels in the middle of a wheel, signifies the manner in which the purposes of God infold one another. When God is bringing about one event, another and another is

involved in it. The first part of the 18th verse expresses the vastness of God's purposes, and the eyes express intelligent perception of the things which are going on. The Man on the throne is the sustaining power of all this, as in Col. i. 17-20. The sitting of the saints in glory is the mystery; we have life now in spirit, we shall have it hereafter in our bodies.

In the first chapter of Ezekiel we have the glory itself, but the prophet sees it three times afterwards—twice connected with Israel's judgment, and afterwards with Israel's blessings. We meet it next in the third chapter where the prophet sees it in the plain, which I believe means the place of Israel's captivity. The power of God was there, though it was not put forth, for if it were it could only consume. We see it again in the eighth chapter. It is there also on a plain, but at Jerusalem the prophet saw the glory in the place of Israel's sin, as he had seen it in the place of Israel's captivity. The image of jealousy was there—the image which provoked God to jealousy. His glory was revealed partially in the temple. That glory brought them through the wilderness, but their sin caused it to depart. In chap. xi. 23 the glory goes up from the midst of the city, and it is now in heaven while the Church is being gathered in. The hope of Israel is, that the glory will come back: that of the Church to appear in it. In the 4th chapter of Revelation John does not see the wheels, for his was a vision of heavenly glory. In Ezekiel xliii., after the long trial of Israel the glory comes back. In the 7th verse, the Lord calls the earth the place of the *soles* of His *feet*, thus showing that though the glory comes back to earth, it does not lose its heavenly character—both heavenly and earthly glory continue.

The 22nd verse of the 9th chapter of Luke shows the Lord Jesus suffering shame and rejection here, and raised the third day, entering on the glory in resurrection. So His followers must suffer here—must be partakers of the sufferings of Christ, as well as of the glory that shall follow. About eight days after the Lord had told His disciples of His rejection and suffering, He takes them up into a mountain and shows them His glory. The eighth day signifies a new period, the commencement of a new week—the period of humiliation having passed by. The disciples of Jesus should gladly bear the cross, for the end will be glory. What a striking contrast is presented between the words of Moses and Elias, and those of

Peter. Let us look at the account of this scene in Mark viii. 31, where the Lord told them He must suffer many things, and be rejected. Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him. The Lord's answer is, "Get thee behind Me, Satan." The wish to avoid the cross, to keep quiet, is from Satan. In the 9th chapter of Luke we have Moses and Elias appearing in glory, and speaking of His decease, and approbation was shown, *verse 35*. If we refuse to die with Christ, we refuse to reign with Him. If we do not die with Him, we die in judgment; but if we are dead with Him, we shall be partakers of His glory. The walk of a saint should be putting the cross upon that flesh which is already dead with Christ.

The late T. TWEEDY.

SUGGESTIONS AS TO RULE.

1. **A**LL believers are priests, *Rev. i. 6*; therefore all can with boldness enter into the Holiest, *Heb. x. 19*; all are equal as worshippers.

2. But although this is true, and needs to be specially kept before us as to worship, there are differences as respects ministry and rule. For ministry, gift is needed, *1 Cor. xii.*, therefore the question, "Are all apostles," &c., *ver. 29*, and the statement, "He gave some," &c., *Eph. iv. 11*. For rule special fitness and qualifications, *1 Tim. iii.*

3. When first Christians have gathered to the name of the Lord, they have been all comparatively young in Christ, or new to the ways of truth; love has abounded and Christ has been so owned that there seemed little need for rule, although even then, some were guiding in some measure; and the result has often been that teaching as to rule has been overlooked.

4. But as time rolled on, and numbers have increased, difficulties have arisen—cases of moral or doctrinal evil manifested themselves—then came a felt need; who in the assembly should specially deal with such, and seek to restore the erring one?

5. It could not be allowed to go on—its very existence raised the question of oversight—the result being that some brother suggested they should have a meeting on some week-evening for prayer, and that they might consult together. But, not seeing clearly God's teaching as to oversight, it may be trembling at the thought of taking a place, it has been announced in the assembly that brethren would meet, not de-

fining or explaining, not able to, may be, because not instructed, although having a heart to care for others.

6. For lack of seeing that all have not rule, brethren young and old have gone; and instead of a meeting of *those taking oversight*, it has been a meeting of *men*. The meeting thus begun continued, till it became an established thing, and all but the sisters were in the habit of attending it. Some called it a "church meeting," others a "business meeting," terms not used in Scripture; but to have called it "a meeting of those taking oversight," which it *should have been*, would have shown that something was wrong—for how could the "newly come to the faith," &c., *1 Tim. iii.*, have oversight?

7. At last the inconvenience of so many being there, evidently not *fitted* for the work, or *doing* it, having manifested itself, those few who had souls at heart to "watch for them," felt that harm was done by mentioning matters of difficulty before so many inexperienced ones, and found a necessity for talking them over more privately. But having begun wrong, they found difficulties in their way; dissatisfaction arose, and murmuring as to some taking too much on themselves, &c.

8. All this, therefore, shows the importance of beginning right, and of teaching Christians, as soon as possible, "to *know* them that labour" among them, *1 Thess. v. 12*, to obey the guides who watch for their souls, *Heb. xiii. 17*; and of showing how GOOD a thing it is when any "DESIRE oversight," *1 Tim. iii. 1*; bringing out from that same chapter that which disqualifies—(1st), Newly come to the faith; (2nd), Inability to rule his own house; (3rd), Want of a good report of those without, &c.

9. And if, as the result, *more* than one be found seeking the welfare of the flock, and to guide and help them, then let FELLOWSHIP in that work be urged, such as we find recorded in the Scripture:—

1st. When murmuring arose as to the daily ministrations, *Acts vi.*, then we read, *ver. 2*, "The Twelve called," this they could only have done after counsel together.

2nd. When tidings reached Jerusalem of blessing given in Samaria, then again we read of united action, *Acts viii. 14*, "When the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard, . . . THEY sent."

3rd. When the disciples were afraid of Paul,

Barnabas took him, in the first instance, "to the Apostles," Acts ix. 27, not to *one* but to ALL.

4th. When the question concerning circumcision came up at Jerusalem, Acts xv. 6, "the Apostles and elders came together."

5th. When Paul sent to Ephesus it was not for *one* elder, but for all "*the elders*," Acts xv. 27.

Thus, wherever we read of the actings of those who had oversight, we find it was the result of united counsel.

10. When those having oversight come together for prayer and counsel, &c., whether once a week or less frequently, it is desirable that on the Lord's-day before each meeting it should be given out in the assembly. All then are kept acquainted with the fact that some are seeking to exercise godly care. Opportunity is afforded to any brother, in whom the desire to watch for souls has been created, to go to it. And further, if any of the Christians in fellowship has any matter to communicate to the brethren together, they could go for that purpose; although, as a rule, it would be found sufficient to name it privately to one or more.

11. To this meeting any who are wishing fellowship might be invited, that all might be able to speak to them; that whilst one or another ask questions, the others might sit by, and seek to discern that which is real and true from that which is false, and thus hinder mere professors or holders of false doctrine from coming into fellowship. Not that this should for a moment be held as imperative, or as a rule not to be departed from (for which there would be no Scripture), for some, through timidity, might be confused, or unable to express themselves; and in such cases, each one seeking opportunity to speak to the person alone, and then taking counsel together, and seeing if they were of one mind, would be far better. Also, at such a meeting opportunity is given to bring baptism before those seeking fellowship; for whilst it is seen that baptism is not the ground of fellowship, nor the door into it, yet it should be the desire of all that the Lord might be obeyed in the "one baptism," by which union with Him is shown; as in the matter of the "one loaf," which speaks of communion as well. Thus, whilst knowledge is not made the ground of fellowship, the Lordship of Christ will be maintained, and souls helped in the knowledge of the truth, and in obedience to it.

12. Further, let it be remembered that the result of oversight, and of such a meeting, is to help the saints, to inform them, and to guide as to receiving, putting away, and restoration of the put-away-one, &c.; and that in each case there must be the deliberate act of the assembly, gathered in the name of the Lord, Rom. xv. 7; 1 Cor. v. 4; 2 Cor. ii. 10; and *not* of those who take oversight, *apart from* the assembly.

13. Lastly, let it be borne in mind by all, and specially by the guides themselves, that only as they carry on their most difficult, and oftentimes painful, work in the spirit of Christ, can they expect to be "known," 1 Thess. v. 12, or "obeyed," Heb. xiii. 17; that they can only "lead" as they themselves are led, or be "obeyed" by saints as they "obey" Him whom they serve. "I am among you as He that serveth," Luke xxii. 27, said the Lord; how then does it become His servants to walk in His steps—to stoop that they may wash the saints' feet, John xiii.—to go down under them that they may bear their burdens, and do all as a willing service to the Lord in the humility of Christ; thus will they be ensamples to the flock, and not as lords ministering to their own pride. "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear," they "shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away," 1 Peter v. 4.

R. T. H.

ROMANS ix. 3.

"For I could wish myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

AN old writer translates, and comments on, this seemingly difficult passage of Scripture as follows:—

"I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart—(for I *did wish* to be accursed from Christ)—for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

The apostle, expressing his affectionate concern for his Jewish brethren who remained in unbelief, reverts naturally to the period, when *he was himself of the same mind*, when he persecuted the Church of Christ, and abhorred the thought of any connection with Jesus of Nazareth. It is as if he said:—

"I mourn (and well I may, for I remember what used to be my own mind), I mourn over my unbelieving countrymen."

"THE LORD LED ME."

Gen. xxiv. 27.

THE leading of the Lord is so indispensable to a proper God-glorifying holy life, that we cannot be too clear and certain that it is the Lord that leads.

In the first place, one thing cannot be disputed, and that is, that where the Lord leads will be the path of obedience, the same that He has commanded us to walk in in His own Word. God is not like man, making a law one day, and either revoking it or changing it the next; on the contrary, not one jot or tittle shall pass: so that we may with confidence say when walking according to what is written,

"He leadeth me, oh! blessed thought."

But it is a perfect insult to God for one, after singing this, to go and walk after his own likings, or even his own knowledge.

In the case of Abraham's servant, we have first his master's command: "Thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell. Thou shalt go unto my country and to my kindred," verses 2, 4. The servant's path of obedience was going to Abraham's country; hence he could say, "The Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren." Looking at these verses we see the meaning of "I being in the way," verse 27; "the Lord God led me in the right way," verse 48; "seeing the Lord hath prospered my way," verse 56.

God's leading was everything to Abraham's servant; he looked for it, so that even in choosing a wife for Isaac, he might be led to the one appointed by God, verse 14. To him there was no such thing as chance. No doubt he remembered his master's words, "He shall send His angel before thee," verse 7.

The force or point of the 27th verse is, "I being in the way"—the way of an obedient servant; for had he gone to Egypt or to the Canaanite around, he would not have been "in the way," nor would he have been prospered by God. How important it is for us to know, and also remember, that the way in which we are to go has been already marked out, so that we are not left to expediency or our own plans in living down here; and I am fully persuaded that God would have us take our instructions from His Word as to *the way of our every day life*, as well as His worship and direct

service! The more we regard our business and home duties as part of His service the better. When we walk thus in the way of His commandments, then, and not till then, can we say, "The Lord led me." And then what a joy to know, "the Lord led me" in my business, in the house, in visiting, and in everything in which I was an obedient servant.

Let me illustrate this in a simple way. A child desires to do what he believes to be in accordance with God's will; say in the matter of going abroad to be a missionary, or perhaps marriage, or more trivial things, which would be right enough, only the parents object. Now comes in God's Word, How is that one to act? It must be in the way of obedience, and God has said, "Obey your parents," Col. iii. 20. Let the child do this, and then it will be able to say, "The Lord led me." God will guide, just as in the case of Abraham's servant when He led him in the right way.

In the common course of this world to be *led* is, in other words, to *follow*. Hence, if we are led by the Lord, it must be because we "follow," that is, "obey" His words; so that if we boast of being led by the Lord, and at the same time it is very evident that we are not walking in His commandments, living an unholy worldly life, is the conclusion not very obvious that we are walking after the devices of our own heart? deceiving ourselves—not led by the Lord. Still the Lord has to do with all our ways, Prov. iii. 6; Psa. cxxxix. 1-5; and if we will not follow in obedience, He must, in that love spoken of in Hebrews, chastise, Heb. xii. 6, "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." One principle is very important in a Christian's life of obedience, Psalm xxxiv. 18, "The Lord is nigh to the broken of heart;" with Matt. xi. 29, "Take My yoke upon you, and *learn of Me*, for I am meek and lowly in heart." A broken heart is not one who can weep on the shortest notice, but one who has no stubbornness; the opposite of the horse and the mule that require bit and bridle to make them obey, Psa. xxxii. Contrast the 8th and 9th verses of this psalm and you will see this principle. The unbroken of heart likened to one without understanding, requiring the bit. "Learning of Christ," to being guided by God's eye. Which will glorify God most?

The words in Joshua iii. 4, can often be applied to our path of obedience in following the Lord: "Ye have not gone this way heretofore," it is a path of faith. "For without faith it is impossible to please God," Heb. xi. We ought never to walk after past experience,

but solely on "Thus saith the Lord." O! the importance of that precious Word; let it permeate our very existence. Let our path of to-day be according to the written Word, and when the morrow comes, let it be guided by the same rule, for "Ye have not gone this way heretofore."

Abraham's servant was perfectly certain that the Lord led him to the house of his master's brethren, not from some inward feeling or emotion, but on seeing the Lord guiding and prospering his way because he had obeyed. Our duty is to obey God, when we will be able to say, like Abraham's servant, "The Lord hath prospered my way."

We are entitled, as children of the God of heaven, to look for prosperity. I don't exclude earthly prosperity, though I would rather not say anything on that point, only just remarking, that prosperity is not always wealth and much money. But I would look to a much higher prosperity. When the Lord took Peter from fishing for fish, it was that he might "catch men." And is not this the higher prosperity? "The work of our hand establish Thou it," Psa. xc. 17. What a privilege it is to be prospered of God in saving souls, snatching them from a lost eternity; in being a blessing to saints around us, lifting up the fallen, comforting the sorrowing with that comfort wherewith we are comforted of God, 2 Cor. i. 4. May the Lord be able to say to us, as He said to Abraham when he had obeyed, "I will bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing," Gen. xii. 2. We ought not to be contented with a mere sort of religious go-to-meeting life; but we should aim at much higher, seeing God has given us "the Word of life," and we expect to see much fruit by the work of our hands.

The Lord *will* prosper our way if we obey Him, there is no doubt about it, though He may take His own time to do it. Witness Nehemiah; he prayed for the prosperity of Jerusalem in the month Chisleu, and the Lord did not send him an answer till the month Nisan, four months after, Neh. i.; ii. God has not promised specified time, for He says a thousand years are as one day; but He has said that He will give us what we ask, if according to His will, and for Jesu's sake, 1 John v. 14, 15; John xiv. 13, 14. As regards His will we find *that* in His own Word, so we need not ask Him to prosper what is not written there. But rest assured of this, He will prosper if we are faithful; Abraham's servant was faithful, therefore he was prospered.

How gracious in God to give us such a perfect example of a faithful servant, and also to give us the words of Abraham, his master, when he says, "If the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear of this thine oath," Gen. xxiv. 8. That the servant be clear of his oath, it was not necessary that the woman follow him; what was necessary was that he should deliver his message to the person whom the angel of the Lord brought him to. In like manner, our faithfulness, and that in which we shall be prospered, is when we can say with our Lord, "I came not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me," John vi. 38; or, as Paul says, "Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel." This does not necessarily mean public preaching of the Word; "to preach the Gospel" means also "to announce good news to any one." It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful, 1 Cor. iv. 2. Faithfulness is the part of the servant; success, the part of God. "There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all," 1 Cor. xii. 6.

We have seen here a servant simply doing his master's bidding, and the Lord prospering him, so that he could say, "The Lord led me." To him the leading of the Lord was exceedingly simple; it was known to him in his being brought to the right place, and seeing how the Lord had been there before, and had prepared the heart of the woman to say "yes" to his request. So will it be with us if we go in the way that our Master has already prescribed, it will be seen by ourselves and by those around.

To be led of the Lord is the aim of all true-hearted Christians. Let it not be said by any of us in a light irreverent spirit, but let us see that when we do make the assertion we are walking according to the Word of the Lord; otherwise we are as those who "stumble at noonday as in the night," Isa. lix. 10. A very evident proof of the Lord's leading will be the Lord prospering our way, for the leading of the Lord never ended in a failure. "And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not," Gal. vi. 9. "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down," Heb. xii. 12.

A.

MANY Mephibosheths are there in the Church, who are halting, not so much from their own fault, as from that of their nurses.

HINTS ON OPEN AIR PREACHING.

I SHOULD be glad if you would be kind enough to allow me space in the *Northern Witness* to make a few remarks and suggestions as to "OPEN AIR" preachers and preaching.

The special season for this important work will have begun, and I am sure there are many whose hearts are stirred up to go forth in the name of the Lord, and preach the Gospel of the "blessed God" to the masses who throng our public parks and streets; and as a rule the major part are unsaved—

"Careless of their souls immortal,
Heeding not the call of God."

It is a mistaken notion that any preacher or preaching will do for the open air. An open air preacher must be *called* and *qualified* for the work. He needs *physical* as well as spiritual strength. A strong voice and a good pair of lungs are indispensable. I have frequently seen a large and attentive congregation dispersed in a very short time, through a brother, whose desire and motive has been good, but lacking the voice, the manner, and matter for an open air audience.

Naturally an open air speaker is known and talked about even more than an in-door one. Therefore it is necessary he should have "a good report of them which are without;" and if an assembly refuses to listen to a brother whose repeated falls into sin has disqualified him morally to minister the Word, the open air is the *last* place where such an one should go to exercise his gift, however qualified for the work he may be in other respects. Hence he must be godly, a man of prayer, of faith, and having a burning zeal, a passion for the salvation of souls.

It is well if he has a true yoke-fellow—one if not more—to work with him; though, if he has not such, he need not wait before he begins his work. To begin *alone* gives an experience which will never be regretted. Many would never have begun the work at all had they waited till a fellow-helper had been given them. Engagement in the work draws the needed helpers.

No definite rule can be laid down as to how the meetings should commence. What takes in one place may fail in another; though good singing as a rule is the most successful and attractive; but even this has failed in some localities where the people have been accustomed to it—and singing requires the help of

others. I remember being alone in a town; there was a large concourse of people at the regatta; when the amusements were over, I went to a square where I knew numbers would pass through on their way home. I sang, read hymns, the Word of God, and spoke—but not even *one* seemed inclined to stay. At last I put my Bible in my pocket, and knelt down on the pavement, and after a short time in silent prayer, I prayed aloud; very soon I had a large assembly of people, who listened attentively to the gospel.

I have found the usual spot where open air meetings are held is not always the best place to get good attendance. Choosing *new* localities, *new* places, brings fresh hearers, and often results in greater blessing. Squares, or closes surrounded by houses and shut in from the public thoroughfare, small streets composed of artizan's dwellings, courts, &c., are fine fields for gospel testimony, especially on a quiet summer's afternoon.

The position and the place where you stand is of the greatest importance. If possible have a wall or building facing you, and begin in your natural tone of voice, not too loud at first. *Long* and unnecessarily loud speaking is most destructive to the voice, throat, and the lungs. Never enter into discussion, nor answer questions put to you by an opponent. I have taken money, but immediately given it to the children—and beer, but emptied it out on the ground successfully. But to do such a thing requires tact and judgment, and special guidance from the Lord at the time.

Remember your throat is not made of steel, nor your chest of iron; and you will find some counties and places more difficult and trying to the voice than others. Alas! alas! how many earnest devoted labourers have had a premature death, others laid aside for life with broken voice and shattered constitution, through not listening to the dictates of nature. Far better to speak only once a week with a good voice than a dozen times with a hoarse and broken one.

I do not write thus to damp the ardour or quench the zeal of any, but rather that those who feel called to this blessed work may, by using a little discretion, continue in it all their lifetime, or "till He come." And may many who have never yet engaged in open air preaching be stirred up in soul to the importance of such a work, and go forth into this vast harvest-field, and preach not only a dead, but a Living, Risen,

Coming Christ, as the *only* way, the *only* truth, the *only* life.

“Tell the guilty of their danger,
While they wander far from God,
While they live to Christ a stranger,
And reject His precious blood.

“Tell them of the joys of heaven,
Purchased by a Saviour’s blood;
How, that they might be forgiven,
Jesus left His throne above.”

AN OPEN AIR PREACHER FOR TWENTY YEARS.

ON the cross Christ had sin laid on Him, the result of that was that *He died*. But *no sin* being WITHIN, *His flesh could never see corruption*.

DEFILEMENT is inseparable from the world. A man can nowhere rest his foot on it without sinking. A strong principle of assimilation combines the world and the heart together. There are, especially, certain occasions when the current hurries a man away, and he has lost the religious government of himself. When the pilot finds, on making the port of Messina, that the ship will not obey the helm, he knows that she is got within the influence of that attraction which will bury her in the whirlpool. We are to avoid the danger, rather than to oppose it. This is a great doctrine of Scripture. An active force against the world is not so much inculcated, as a retreating declining spirit. “Keep thyself unspotted from the world.”

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to “prove all things,” and “hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.

QUESTION NO. VIII.

Is it is right for a Christian to be become or to continue a member of an Orange, Mason, or Good Templar Lodge? And how would you act towards one who would persist in remaining in such?

REPLY.

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers,” 2 Cor. vi. 14, and the whole context cannot leave a moment’s doubt as to the sinfulness of such membership on the part of a believer. “The form of godliness” which some of these societies put on, while “denying the power thereof,” can but make them the more loathsome to God, and the command, “from such turn away,” 2 Tim. iii. 5, therefore, rightly applies to such things.

As to those who refuse to acknowledge the unscripturalness of such associations, or are indifferent about obeying the Word of God in reference to them, we would apply 2 Thess. iii. 14, 15, a commandment that in no way implies putting away from fellowship, but guides our individual behaviour towards persistently disobedient saints.

QUESTION NO. IX.

Is it correct to say that God, in this dispensation, is ruling in judgment, and punishing the world for

offences? When countries are visited with famine and pestilence, while people are struck dead while swearing, &c., &c., are those to be regarded as sent by God in judgment? or, are they natural circumstances? or, are they caused by Satan, the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air?

REPLY.

Events such as are referred to in this question may be caused by Satan, as the agent; by natural circumstances, as the means; and may yet be the judgment of God, being by His permission and under His control. See this illustrated in the experience of Job.

Although this is pre-eminently the age of God’s long-suffering grace, nevertheless He, as Sovereign, may, and does at times show Himself in judgment, especially among His own children—see 1 Cor. xi. 30-32., compare 1 Pet. iv. 17—and toward the ungodly; see Acts xii. 23—Herod smitten by the Angel of the Lord.

National calamities are especially expressive of the judgment of God; for it is only in this world that nations, as such, have any existence.

Israel’s calamities are an instance of this, pre-eminently—see Luke xxi. 23; compare 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16. But it cannot be supposed that other nations are exempt from judgment, whilst such events are taking place as those foretold in Matt. xxiv. 7. Rather

ought these to be regarded as the providential warnings of Him who "chastiseth the gentile" Psalm xciv. 10, for the purpose of awakening men to give ear to the gospel.

QUESTION NO. X.

Can it be said of Christians who are connected with a sect or denomination, that they "gather in the name of the Lord"? or that they do so "in degree"?

REPLY.

"Where two or three are gathered together in (or, unto) My name, there am I in the midst of them" Matt. xviii. 20.

Surely this passage, viewed in connection with its context, implies something more definite than merely an assembly gathered by the will of man for religious purposes.

To be gathered unto the name of the Lord Jesus, implies, 1st, that He is the central object whose attraction has drawn them together; and, 2nd, that those so gathered are in subjection to Him as the Lord in their midst.

We fully admit that many of the children of God connected with the various sects in Christendom, do in their inmost souls, and in their lives as individuals, acknowledge the Lordship of Christ. Some, indeed, may have more grace, more real devotedness of heart, more readiness to suffer for Christ's sake, than many of those who are separated from the sects, and gathered only to the Lord.

But it is quite impossible to recognise the different denominations with which such are connected, as "gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus." How can an assembly composed to a large extent of the unsaved, be said to be gathered to His name? Or one where His ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper are perverted; the former being administered to unconscious infants, who are thereby declared to have been "admitted into the visible church," "engrafted into Christ," or "regenerated"; and the latter transformed into a sacramental vow which all respectable persons above a certain age, whether born again or not, are expected to accept? Or an assembly where no voice can be heard but that of a clergyman, and Christ's own gifts, bestowed for the edification of His people, rejected and silenced, or allowed to go and exercise their ministry in other places and on other occasions? Or one which is ordered in every particular according

to the device of man, and the order and liberty which the Word of Christ enjoins declared to be out of date and impracticable?

Even if it were a gathering composed only of Christians; is it an assembly where Christ, as Lord, is ordering according to His revealed will; ruling, and teaching, and ministering, by those whom His Spirit has enabled; bringing in whom He would have brought in, and putting away whom He would have put away?

This is the question to be considered when speaking of being "gathered to the name of the Lord"; not the individual character of those who compose the assembly.

The little remnant at Jerusalem in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, were gathered to Jehovah, at the place of Jehovah's choice.

There might be an Esther or a Mordecai in Babylon, of greater faith and grace than many who went up to Jerusalem, but in no sense could they be said, whatever their personal godliness, to be gathered unto Jehovah's name.

QUESTION NO. XI.

Does the word "baptism" in Rom. vi. 4, and Col. ii. 12, refer to baptism with water or the baptism of the Holy Ghost?

REPLY.

Baptism in water is a symbol of the reality already accomplished in regard to every believer, namely, identification with Christ in His death and resurrection. This is spoken of as a "baptism" in 1 Cor. xii. 13, and as being "baptized into Jesus Christ" and "baptized into His death," in Rom. vi. 3. In verse 4, the symbolic act of baptism follows, as the burying of those who are already dead.

In Col. ii. 12 the language of the symbol is used to express and explain the truth of the reality; as in the previous verse the language of an Old Testament symbol is used to express and explain another reality.

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## TRADITION, AND THE WORD OF GOD.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

Scripture read: Mark vii. 1-13. Col. ii. 6-23. 1 Pet. i. 17-19.

**S**PECIALLY notice these words in the Gospel by Mark, "Making the Word of God of none effect through your tradition." It is remarkable that in 1 Pet. i. 18, the apostle does not say that we are redeemed by the blood of Christ from our sins, although that is true; or that we are redeemed from the curse of the law, although that also is true, but that we are redeemed "from our vain conversation received by tradition from the fathers." He was writing to those who had been brought to the knowledge of Christ out of the nation of Israel. It was they who were pre-eminently brought up under the influence of tradition. Consequently, when the Lord Jesus came into their midst as God's mighty prophet, to declare the mind and will of God, He found something there that was neutralizing the Word of God—making the Word of God of none effect; something that the people of Israel were holding dearer to them than the Word of God, and that was the traditions which they had received from their fathers.

Now, no question that we can possibly ask is, I believe, of such importance as this, HAS GOD SPOKEN? That is the great question. That is what Satan has opposed in every age, and is still opposing, and now more intensely than ever as this evil age rolls on and the world is ripening, not for the fancied Millennium which man is hoping for, to be ushered in by arts and sciences and education with gospel combined—but for coming judgment—when the Lord will thoroughly

purge His floor, and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

I am not going this afternoon to argue with any who may have come in not believing that the Scriptures are the Word of God. I am presuming that we are here gathered as an assembly of Christians, those who have answered for themselves the question, "Has God spoken?" and who are fully persuaded that the Scriptures are the Word of God.

We hold, that God "at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past to the fathers by the prophets;" that "in these last days He has spoken unto us by His Son," and that He has also spoken through the apostles of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

We say that God HAS spoken, and His Word has been preserved, miraculously preserved, for us in the Scriptures. We have heard His voice speaking to our own souls in the Scriptures; our opened eyes have beheld a glory there that has proved it to be Divine; our souls have clasped in faith the precious revelation—and our faith does not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power and truth of God.

The question then arises, Have any other voices spoken to us than the Word of God?

When the Lord Jesus came into the midst of Israel He found the minds of the people stuffed full of tradition, full of meaningless commandments and fables and theories, that had been handed down to them from centuries before.

We are hardly aware sometimes of the influence that time-honoured tradition has upon our minds. There is nothing which many find it harder to do, than, whenever they are brought to know the Lord, to give

up all their former religious opinions, and begin afresh as new-born babes, desiring alone the sincere milk of the Word—receiving every thought anew and every thought from God.

We are not yet, any of us, aware of the extent to which we are under the influence of the thoughts and teachings received from our parents and our forefathers, and which they also received from those who went before them—which come to us with the weight and authority of generations, but not from the Word of God.

When we come to test some of these dogmas and practices, we are astonished that we cannot find them in the Scriptures. We search for them in the Word of God, but they are not there, therefore we conclude, “this is the influence of tradition,” “this is a something that is neutralizing the Word of God and preventing it from having due authority in our souls.” Now, what I have to contend for is the paramount authority of the Word of God. To Him and to Him alone are we responsible, and what He claims from His people is implicit subjection to His Word.

To show the importance which God attaches to His Word, turn to Psalm cxxxviii. ver. 2, “Thou hast magnified Thy Word above all Thy name;” or, “upon all Thy name,” I believe gives the sense more clearly. That is to say: the *name* of God is the *character* of God; so when God proclaimed His name to Moses He proclaimed His character. See Exod. xxxiv. 5-7. So in saying that He has magnified His Word upon all His *name*, God means us to understand that all His love, truth, righteousness, power, yea, His whole character is pledged to maintain the Word He has spoken.

Again, in Psalm xii. 6, we read, “The words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.” Here we see that God’s Word is *absolute truth*. As the Lord Jesus said in His prayer to His Father in John xvii. 17, “Thy Word is truth.” But that is not the voice of the nineteenth century! That is not what we read in those newspapers which are most popular and most influential in fashioning the minds of the people; nor is that what is taught in many pulpits and in other places of even greater influence, where the Word of God is criticized, and openly declared to be unreliable and in many parts spurious and erroneous.

The Lord Jesus in dealing with the questioners of His day constantly appealed to the Scriptures. To

Him, that was a *final appeal*. He knew no other standard of truth.

Let us also hold fast by the written Word of God. We are in danger of catching the spirit of the age.

As we cast our eyes down the columns of the daily newspapers we find that it is now popular to sneer at the Word of God which Jesus revered. The first chapter of Genesis, where we find the Divine record of creation, is declared to be a fable, and those solemn and terrible passages in the Book of Revelation concerning the eternal punishment of the wicked, are simply denied. The one is assailed by the scientific men of the day, who declare the incredibility of the world having been created by the Word of God; and the other by the religious men, who say that if God is love then He cannot punish for ever His rebellious creatures—forgetting all the time that “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.” But God will vindicate His own character; it is ours to abide by the Word He has spoken. “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God,” Heb. xi. 3. Unbelief does not understand, but faith does. The eye of faith has discovered the Word of God to be light, and we have taken it “as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.” If all the blind men in the city were to say with one consent that the sun is not shining, we who have our eyesight should not believe them, we would only pity them—we should say, “poor men, they are blind!” So God has opened our eyes to see that every word of His is pure, and that the Scriptures are His Word, and by that we stand or fall.

But I would like now, as shortly as possible, to show how in nearly all the epistles we have warnings against those who would surely arise to oppose the Scriptures. Turn to Rom. xvi. 17, “Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences (*i.e.*, stumbling blocks) contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned and”—go and hear them? read their books? Is that it? Ah no, but “AVOID THEM.”

So in this first of the epistles which gives us the gospel in its fulness, we are forewarned that the time would come, when some would “by good words and fair speeches” introduce that which would be contrary to, and subversive of, the doctrine which God had given to His people to hold.

1 Cor. ii. 4, “My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom.” Paul knew the



danger of introducing human wisdom along with God's testimony; but ere long, in the Corinthian Church, the leaven of the Sadducees was introduced, and in 1 Cor. xv. 12, we read "how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" Thus, at so early a period, did man's wisdom (which indeed is folly) come in to oppose the blessed, glorious, fundamental truth of the resurrection. Turn next to 2 Cor. ii. 17: "For we are not as many, who corrupt (or, deal deceitfully with) the Word of God." Mark that word "many." Even so early as Paul's day there were not a few false teachers, corrupting, or rather adulterating, the Word of God; mixing up that which was human and false with that which was Divine.

Let us look at Gal. i. 6: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ; . . . but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." The perversion of the gospel here referred to, was the adding of the law to the gospel. Teaching the Galatians that they were not only to be saved by grace, through faith alone, but also by law-keeping, circumcision, &c. Just what we find so often still in the minds and on the lips of many—"We must believe in Christ, and do the best we can." This is not the gospel of Christ. If I am to be saved, partly by believing in Christ and partly by doing something myself—then it is not of grace. What was the truth of the reformation, for which Luther so earnestly and mightily contended? He came forth as God's witness, with the open Bible, declaring that God had spoken: declaring in the face of the enemies of the truth, that salvation was "by grace, through faith," and "not of works." But that is not the popular doctrine now. Now it is rather, that if a man be only sincere in his belief, and moral in his life, he is just as likely to be saved in one way as another. Thus, everything is tending to the superseding of God's truth, by human wisdom and tradition. But all the character of God is pledged to overthrow, in the end, everything that is not of His planting. The time is coming when the Word of the Lord alone shall be exalted. "The Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge you in the last day."

Again, in Philippians, we read, chap. iii. 18, "For many walk, of whom I have told you before, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mind

earthly things." Thus he writes, warning them of those who would profess to be Christians, but whose hearts were in earthly things, leading the children of God to avoid the cross, to settle down on the earth, and to surrender their heavenly character as strangers and pilgrims here.

Now, let us turn again to the passage read in Coloss. ii. In verse 8, you will find two things—on the one hand "philosophy and vain deceit," that is the Gentile snare; on the other hand, "the tradition of men, the rudiments of the world," this is the Jewish snare. But whether it was Gentile philosophy or Jewish tradition, it was alike in opposition to Christ. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in Christ, and these are for us in the Scriptures. The antidote to the philosophy and tradition, and other oppositions of the second chapter, is to be found in the 16th verse of the third chapter: "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly."

Read also 1 Tim. iv. 1-5, and you will see how the doctrines and commandments of men are opposed to the Word of God. The Romish doctrine of the celibacy of the priesthood is doubtless what is here foretold. If that which God sanctions, whether in relationship or in meats, is forbidden, then the Word of God is made of none effect.

See also in 2 Tim. iv. 1-5, "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine." I say solemnly, the time *has* come. The doctrine of God's Word is being cast aside, and the philosophy, tradition, doctrines, and commandments of men are welcomed in its place.

Now, observe the exhortation in 1 Tim. vi. 20, "O, Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called; which some professing have erred from the faith." Is science opposed to the Word of God? I answer emphatically, "No." God's Word is perfectly compatible with science. Man's theories, which are in opposition to the truth of God, are "science *falsely so called*." The Lord Jesus in all His encounters with the opposers of His day—whether Pharisees with their traditions, or Sadducees with their reasoning—appealed alone to the Scriptures. "It is written" was enough for Him. May the same faith and the same simplicity be ours. Amen.

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"BLESSED are they whose iniquities are forgiven."

## FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.

## CHAP. XIV.—THE PASSAGE OF THE RED SEA.

"He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it was dried up: so He led them through the depths, as through the wilderness. And He saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left" (Psalm cvi. 9-11).

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son" (Colos. i. 13).

**T**HERE are many believers who do not enjoy settled peace. Sometimes they are bright and happy, at other times sad and downcast; sometimes their assurance is full and clear, but at other times they are found doubting if they be really the Lord's. Occupied with their frames and feelings, their joys and sorrows, they live upon their own experience, looking *in*, instead of having the eye of faith on Christ, and rejoicing in Him and the full deliverance that He has wrought for them. This may arise from a variety of causes. Some have, at the time of their conversion, only heard and believed an obscure Gospel, or part of the Gospel of God concerning His Son. They have been taught that to doubt and fear as to their ultimate safety is a certain mark of grace, and that the very best thing that God can mark in His saints, is an everlasting wail over the evil that dwells within. Thus they continually live in a hazy atmosphere, brooding over their own experience and attainments, their inward holiness or corruptions. It is very far from our object, in speaking thus, to make believers think lightly of indwelling sin, or underrate the power of Satan. We believe it is highly important that every saint of God should know the character of the flesh within him, and estimate aright the power of the devil against him. But we are equally persuaded of this, that brooding over these things, and perpetually summing up their power, gives no victory over them, and that *victory* and not *defeat*—*liberty* and not *bondage*—is the normal condition of the man who has believed the Gospel of God. The latter part of the seventh chapter of Romans may be the experience of a truly converted sinner, and we believe it is the experience of many; but that it is the every-day experience of a soul knowing and believing the death, resurrection and glory-gospel of that epistle, and in possession of the best that God has to give, we do not believe; for how could God command His saints to "Rejoice evermore,"

and offer the sacrifice of praise to Him continually, if He gave them no higher note to sing than "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?"

The foregoing thoughts have been suggested by the chapter before us, and by the position and experience of redeemed Israel, encamped "between Migdol and the Sea." Pi-hahiroth is their camping ground—it means the "opening of liberty," which to them it truly was. Thither they had been led by the hand of Jehovah to learn the first of their lessons as His redeemed. They were still on the borders of Egypt, and within the boundary line of Pharaoh's kingdom. The Red Sea rolled before them—the wilderness had shut them in. Maddened and infuriated at the thought of losing them, Pharaoh and six hundred of his chariots are hastening on their track—it is his last desperate effort to recover his prey. The people are afraid, and cry out to God—for as yet they know not that He is on their side against the foe.

The history here but tells the experience and describes the state of many a young believer and trembling saint of God, who as yet have only known Him as a satisfied Judge in Egypt, but not as a Deliverer—*One for them, and against their foes*. Is the reader such an one? Perhaps but recently he was an awakened sinner, asking "what must I do to be saved?" He was pointed to Christ as the One who died for sinners, and through faith in Him found peace. The Blood is on the lintel, and he fears no wrath from God—with him he is at peace. Not so with Satan. Like Pharaoh he presses hard upon your soul—he brings up the past—he beclouds the future; he tells you you are his, that you have done his work, and must receive his wages. Your state is even worse than when you were Christless, for then you had no such troubles, the devil held his prize in peace. Now it is not so, for—

"Sin, Satan, Death, press near  
To harass and appall;"

so that, like Israel, you almost wish you had been left in Egypt, quietly doing the devil's work; for it looks as if he were to have you in his clutches soon again. Others around you are happy—they sing for joy, but you can only groan; possibly these give you but little comfort, for they do not understand your case, they never were encamped like you between "Migdol and the Sea"—they passed into liberty at once, and in the full sunshine of the Gospel of God they sang their song

of deliverance. But no such song is yours, for there is no song in Egypt—no praise between “Migdol and the Sea.” The “Salvation of God,” as typified at the Red Sea, must be known, ere the song of deliverance or the shout of victory can be heard—for until we know the “Salvation of the Lord” in its fulness, Satan and the world will assert their claims in some way over us.

The word to Israel was, “*Stand still*, and see the Salvation of the Lord, which He will show to you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see no more for ever. *The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace,*” Exod. xiv. 13, 14. And what a word it was too for the trembling thousands of Israel! The Lord had undertaken the battle. He had placed Himself between them and the foe. It was no longer a question between Pharaoh and Israel—but it was now between Pharaoh and Israel’s God. They were to “Stand still, and see.” And so, beloved saints of God, it is with you, for Jesus has espoused your cause—

“He stood between us and the foe,  
And willingly died in our stead.”

The rod of Moses was stretched over the sea, and immediately its waters were cleft asunder. A pathway was opened through the surging waves and they stood like crystal walls on either side. This was the Lord’s doing, and surely it was marvellous in their eyes as they stood beholding the power of God displayed for their deliverance! “Speak to the children of Israel, that they go forward,” is the next command, for the way of the Lord is perfect. There are the “Stand still’s” and the “Go forward’s” in His dealings with us, and both are perfect in their season.

“And by faith they passed through the Red Sea,” not only where no water was, but on “dry ground;” the place of their feet was firm and sure, there was no yielding beneath their step. But it was a path where faith alone could walk, and step by step in faith they walked until the other shore was reached. Onward too rushed the foe: but alas for him! he had entered the scene of his destruction.

First the dark side of the cloud, then the broken chariot wheels, and finally the surging billows of death around Pharaoh and his host, tell out that Jehovah fights for Israel and against their foes. That He is on the side of His redeemed, that His power is exerted on their behalf for salvation, and against the host of Pharaoh for their utter destruction. The triumph

was complete; not one Egyptian was saved, not a child of Israel was lost. The morning sun shone forth on an unruffled sea, with Pharaoh and his host entombed beneath its waters, and on six hundred thousand delivered captives standing on its shore looking back on the “Salvation of the Lord,” and singing their song of victory in the enjoyment of it.

This is the picture of a mightier conflict, and a grander victory once won for guilty man. Pharaoh is the type of Satan—Egypt of this world, of which he is the ruler. The Red Sea is the figure of death—the boundary line of Satan’s kingdom—his last and greatest stronghold. The camping ground, “between Migdol and the Sea,” is a condition those are found in who know not as yet the fulness of the “Salvation of the Lord,” as wrought *for them* through the death and resurrection of Christ. Let the believing reader turn his eyes a moment to “the place called Calvary”—and to the tomb in the garden which was near it—and contemplate what was done for him there. Let him watch the gathering foes and powers of darkness there, and how each was met and defeated, and that for ever—and how, too, the claims against the sinner were all eternally satisfied. The sight will give him lasting peace, and if he have doubts and fears it will chase them away.

The *world* was there—*there* in every form and grade—religious, political, and profane—they were all represented around the Cross; they all had a hand in the rejection and the murder of the Holy One. The world has fully told out its own character, and shown its nakedness and shame. The world’s probation is morally over, and its history closed—its condemnation has been sealed, and its doom written at the Cross. And by the same blessed work the believer is delivered from this present evil world, Gal. i. 3; he has escaped from its doom by the Cross, in which he glories, Gal. vi. 14. As the Red Sea rolled between the children of Israel and Egypt, so stands the Cross between the believer and the world. It is the door of his escape from it, and the impregnable barrier that separates him from it. Does the reader know this—does he with his heart believe it—and does he act as if it were true? Is there a real line of separation between him and the ungodly? Does he reckon himself to have died out of this world with Christ, in order that with Him he might rise to enjoy a better? This is the lesson of the Cross of Christ. And well it will be for us to seek to learn it

well; for there be many who boast in the Cross for Salvation, who seem to have forgotten that the same Cross severs them from the present world and shuts it up to judgment.

Satan too was there—there in all the might of his power. The “Prince of Life,” and “him that had the power of death,” met on Calvary. It was the decisive contest between the Seed of the woman and the serpent. Satan had the power of death—it was the stronghold of his kingdom. Men of faith had been held in bondage—even Hezekiah wept sore when death drew near; it was untrodden ground, for no one had passed through it and returned to earth again. But Jesus entered the stronghold, and for a time it looked as if He had been conquered. The Prince of Life was laid within the tomb. The stone, the watch, and seal were put upon Him. The scattered flock, the fearful disciples, the weeping Mary, and the rejoicing world, seem to say that Satan had gained the day. But his apparent triumph was but short, for Jesus burst the bars of death. Vain were the stone, the watch, the seal, to hold the Prince of Life; through death He destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage, Heb. ii. 14, 15. Satan’s head was bruised—he was defeated in his own stronghold; his power was broken, and his kingdom conquered. The Lord is risen indeed! the keys of death are in His hand! He has won for all His people a life beyond death and Satan’s power. The weakest saint has life in Christ, even life for evermore. Satan can neither capture him again nor have him in his hell; for he is delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of the Son of God, col. i. 13. This, too, the Cross has given the saint.

Law was satisfied, and its claims were met at Calvary—it condemns no more. Justice is now on the believing sinner’s side, and righteousness proclaims his pardon. The “Salvation of the Lord” is complete. Doubting one, “stand still,” and “see the Salvation of the Lord.” Of what are you afraid? Life is yours—death too is yours; and you are delivered from the power of Satan and the world. Brush your tears away, then, and begin the song, as Israel did of old,

For we have known redemption, Lord,  
From bondage worse than their’s by far;  
Sin held us with a stronger cord,  
But by Thy mercy free we are.

J. R.

## AFFLICTIONS AND CONSOLATIONS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS ON THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER,

By J. G. B. Aug., 1851.

**T**HERE are three things in this epistle: 1st, the apostle contemplates the saint in times of various troubles; 2ndly, the mind with which the trouble should be passed through; and 3rdly, the consolations which God provides for such a time. There is nothing very remarkable in the bearing of it; but so much the more needed by the soul very often;—it is homely, practical. Godly power marks the whole of the epistle.

Observe he addresses it to “strangers scattered throughout Pontus,” &c., &c., 1 Peter i. 1. Now the very salutation intimates that things are not right with them here—“scattered strangers!” as though they had no certain dwelling-place, like their Master. It is not said, “an embodied church,” with all its ceremonies and ordinances; but he addresses himself to “scattered strangers.” This alone puts the saint into a place of suffering—they had no rest for the sole of their foot—they are “strangers,” scattered to and fro.

Now the first trial that he contemplates in the first chapter, is *the trial of faith*, verses 5-13. The form of trial here is that dealing of God’s hand with you, which has its direct business with your faith—whose office and property it is to exercise the soul in the principles of faith. He does not define what it may be—it may be a circumstance or disappointment; but something, the direct character of which is, to link the heart with the objects of faith. And it is very beautiful, in the wisdom of the Spirit, to leave it undefined, the only thing that marks it being this—it is the trial of faith. And we all know it. If you meet with a disappointment or loss, what is the support under it? Why, this “looking forward.” It may cause present heaviness; but the support which God provides for this trial of faith is, “the looking forward;” that in the day of the appearing of Christ, this faith, which has been burnished by the fire, shall be found unto praise, and honour, and glory.

Now just look at those three things—here is the trial of faith—the exercise of heart, fitted to link it with eternity and heaven—the Lord comforting the heart under such a trial by directing it onward to the appearing of Jesus, and the Lord counselling the heart how to behave itself under

the trial—"Gird up the loins"—don't be faint-hearted—don't yield—"be ye sober," and hope—hope still!

How simple is this! The character of the trial is undefined; and whatever cross or accident meets you in your path, you may put it down—happily put it down to the account of this—it is designed by your heavenly Father to try your faith. No matter how it may happen. The Spirit of God does not tell you to reason about it; but tells you to submit under it, and rejoice in the hope to which it is all leading.

In the 2nd chapter, you find a very well defined trial. There is comfort provided, and duty prescribed in the midst of it. Now read with me from the 18th to the 21st verse—"Servants be subject," &c. Now here there is a very well defined suffering or trial. It is not left unexpressed as in the previous chapter, but here is a suffering that is commonly known in human life, and the more we ought to value it. Here is a suffering brought from the ill usage and treatment of others—a servant suffering under the hand of a froward master. Well, it may be a neighbour suffering under the hand of an evil-minded neighbour or relative. You may put it in various forms—(the Spirit need not illustrate every case). But here we have a servant enduring the frowardness of an evil-minded master. Now here is a well-understood, and oft-experienced sorrow in this life. It is but the trial of faith—Oh, how one admires this! There is comfort in showing this, that the Spirit of God knows your little secret frettings, and that there are none of them, however small or ordinary, outside His sympathy. Well, how does he tell them to behave themselves? Beautifully. In the first place, for their great comfort, he says—"All this secret fretting goes on under the eye of God with deep acceptableness." Oh, what a comfort this is! Suppose a poor silent, suffering servant, meeting the ill nature of his master, why there he is in such a condition; but all the day long the eye of God is resting on his behaviour with delight and complacency. That is the ingredient in the scene which faith apprehends. Nature will feel the suffering; but faith apprehends the unseen eye of God waiting upon the patient endurance of the servant with complacency.

A servant, suffering all the day long from the frowardness of an evil-minded master, was the life of Jesus. He was reviled, and ill-treated by an apostate world: yet He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him who judgeth righteously. Now does not the

apostle speak very sweetly to us there? He comes, and looks at them in the most common scene of human life, and he dignifies it; the most common material in human life he dignifies with the sympathies of Christ, and he dignifies with the complacency of God Himself. Can anything be more precious than that? Again I say, nothing more common-place, and that is what makes it so delightful.

Now look to the 3rd chapter. You get another suffering, but in a different form. In the 14th verse—"If ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye," &c., 14th verse to 22nd. Now here is a new kind of suffering—"for righteousness sake;" that is, you go on in a path of integrity—a path of uprightness—maintaining that at all cost; you are faithful to the Lord, and this brings you into suffering. Now this is another kind of trial. And how does the Spirit of God comfort us under that? Why he tells us, beloved, to "sanctify the Lord God in our hearts"—to remember Christ just in the same condition; and he points us to the days of Noah. Noah for a long period (120 years)—what was he doing then? He was preparing the ark. He looked to be the fool of his generation—the very object of scorn—that he should occupy morning to evening, day after day, and year after year preparing an ark—preparing a ship for dry ground! It was utter folly. Well, it was the path that God laid out for him, and, whatever it might have cost him, he had God with him. He "sanctified the Lord God in his heart;" and not only that, beloved; not only had he communion, but he had this, the answer of a good conscience towards God; not only was he upright, but he was making that ark which was every moment to him the witness of his eternal safety. He knew it—he knew that the waters were coming—that a day of judgment was before him; but every stroke of his hammer went as a blessed witness to his soul, that he should be safe in that day of trial. Well, so the Spirit of God tells us, we are to pass through the trial, having "the answer of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

There is a beautiful link between Noah preparing the ark, and what ought to be the condition of your soul. You should have a good conscience—not a good moral conscience, but a *freed* conscience. The resurrection of Jesus Christ gives you a good conscience towards God—it discharges your conscience from all guilt, and delivers it from all fear of a coming judgment.

Just as Noah, every stroke of his hammer told him he would be safe in the day of judgment; so you ought to go on in the trials of righteousness which the maintenance of a good conscience may bring, in the support of a good conscience *towards God*. You must not give up a good moral conscience; let the exercise of righteousness in the world cost you what suffering it may, you must not give up righteousness; but your support in this path is this, that between you and God, all is settled for eternity—the resurrection of Jesus Christ has sealed upon your conscience eternal peace.

Now what a beautiful picture this is of the suffering saint! If it be, as we have seen, the trial of his faith—if it be a servant, enduring all the day long the ill-treatment of a froward master—or here, if, at the cost of everything, he maintains the righteousness and uprightness of his walk, and thus maintains a good conscience—his comfort is this, that which poor Noah enjoyed—whenever judgment might come, he was as safe as if he were in heaven.

Well now in the 4th chapter you get another kind of sorrow, and that is in the very opening of it. You must count upon the trial, not of righteousness, but of holiness. The former was given in the 3rd chapter; the trial of holiness is given in the opening of the 4th. What is the difference? Righteousness is uprightness of conduct outside, in the world; holiness is the pure and chaste behaviour, in your own members within. Well that is put to trial in this world too—one without, and the other within. As you have to fight the battle of holiness within, so you have to fight the battle of righteousness without. You are to fight the fight of holiness in your own members, as you are to fight the fight of righteousness in the course of the world. And what is your comfort? Why this, that you shall soon give an account to Him that is ready to judge quick and dead; and remember, that while you are fighting this fight of holiness, you are living your time, not to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. There is your comfort. If we had any bit of heart at all, it would be a great support to us to know that God is with us.

In the progress of the 4th chapter, you find another form of suffering, and that is what we call "*martyr suffering*." Not suffering from the trial of faith, or from the frowardness of an evil master, from a relation, or nearest of kin, nor the suffering for righteousness,

nor the trial of holiness in the members, but more characteristically what we call martyr-suffering. Well, how does he speak to us under that? "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial. . . . But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings," &c., verses 12, 13.

Oh, with what a cheerful mind the Spirit of God speaks! Supposing we were this moment dragged off to the prison—to meet the stake, like hundreds before us—see with what a cheerful spirit the Holy Ghost would put us on the journey! "Think it not strange," says he; for when you are taking the journey to the prison or the stake, you are only on the journey with the Saviour to Calvary. You and I may not be prepared for it, but we must not measure the Spirit's thoughts by our attainments. It is but a little pain for a while, when His glory shall appear. "Ye may be glad," &c., verses 13, 14. Now mark the current of the cheerful spirit here, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you," &c., verses 13, 14. Happy thing it is, that when the martyr is on his way to death, you should see the Spirit of glory resting upon his head. His persecutions for Christ's sake are the very plattings of the crown upon his brow! It is the blessed Saviour coming and fitting the crown upon his brow. "The Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you." And again I say, in this, which to nature is the gloomiest we have looked at yet—in the trial of faith, in enduring the ill-treatment of others, we may have human relief; but here, shut up to Christ, with nothing but the gloom of a prison around us, nothing but the fiery stake before the eye—here the glad spirit, the oil of gladness, comes to anoint the spirit richly. And, O beloved! to know that, while even in the dungeon, the hand of God is fitting a crown of glory to the brow! "The Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified." We know not what a day may bring forth, but Jesus knows, and He will provide.

Well then, in the last chapter, you find here, at the 6th verse, "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." And here I believe we return very much to the first chapter. We can't tell in what form that "mighty hand" may humble. It may be by removing prop after prop, disappointing one expectation of the

heart after another. It may be by terrible ways God may humble you ; and what is worst of all, He may appear in the very act to be against you. He may seem to carry Himself so wilfully against your circumstances and your present joys, that the heart will begin to fear lest God should be against us. It is a "mighty hand ;" but let that comfort you instead of frightening you. There is a great comfort in this word "mighty." It is not a "soothing hand ;" it is a "mighty hand," that seems set on bruising. Well, what says the Spirit of God ? "Humble yourselves" under it, for "He will exalt you." Oh how beautiful ! See how roughly Joseph spoke to his brethren. He put them in prison—told the keepers to take charge of them—but in secret he wept ; and, in due time, he "exalted" them.

"Casting all your care upon Him," &c., verse 7. Oh, what comfort there is here ! I don't believe that Joseph's tears in secret have a stronger voice in our ears than this, because it tells me, that while the hand is dealing roughly outside, the heart is feeling inside. Well, there it is ; and as to the devil's temptation, resist him. Don't "humble yourselves" under that hand—"resist" him, just as did Jesus of old—"Get thee behind me, Satan"—and "the God of all grace, who hath called us," &c., "perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you," verse 10. Thus the mighty energy of the Holy Ghost carries the Apostle Peter, and you, and me, as well as those "strangers," in the hearing of all saints, through every variety of human trial. Whether it is the undefined exercise and trial of faith ; whether it is enduring suffering from the frowardness and ill-nature of those that are around us, or from the maintenance of righteousness and a good conscience, or from the struggles between flesh and spirit, or martyr-suffering ; or enduring under the hand of God, or the devil himself—the mighty energy of the Spirit of God carries Peter through them all, to provide strength and consolation. The Lord help our unbelief—take our hearts, and keep them in company with these eternal realities ; and then, if it be the stake itself, let us meet it with a cheerful heart ; deeply assured of this, that the hand of God is weaving a crown for the brows of His faithful people !

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God put the Son of His love from His bosom, to become the Substitute of the sinner—to do for the sinner what he could not do for himself.

## DAVID.

DAVID had had many and precious opportunities, from the day on which he passed over the brook Kedron the rejected king clothed in sackcloth, of learning God, of experiencing His pity and patience, His wisdom and power, the unchangeableness of His love, and the truth of His Word. In such circumstances as that of passing the brook, moreover, he was a shadow, although a faint one, of His Lord, who afterwards passed over the same brook as the rejected King of the Jews, sorrowful even unto death from the prospect of that awfully bitter cup which He was about to drink on Calvary.

If the Psalms ascribed to David as written at that time were so written, he did profit by his trials. He proved Jehovah as he never had before. He had sent back the ark to its place, believing that if Jehovah delighted in him as His servant and as king He would return him to the throne, but if not, he bowed ; and now he proved that Jehovah could be trusted, and that He delighted in him.

Let us, beloved, be ever on the watch to learn God by all the circumstances of each day, be they joyful or sorrowful, pleasant or painful : by obedience, yes, and even by disobedience, and under chastisement (for God, who corrects our faults, does teach us wisdom by them), hearing Him say in each event, "Acquaint *now* thyself with Him, and be at peace, thereby good shall come unto thee." You did this when you believed in Jesus for salvation ; *now* do it for fuller, richer communion with the God who saved you—even your Father who is in heaven.

David returned to his house, shut up his concubines in ward for life, and commissioned Amasa (not Joab) to pursue after Bichri. Amasa was clothed in Joab's garment, bound to him by a belt, to which was attached a sword. This promotion had been promised him by David (whether wisely or not, judge ye), but that promotion was of short duration, for in the pursuit of Bichri the sword fell out, and with it Joab slew Amasa, and led forward the forces in pursuit of the rebel.

The sons of Zeruah were too hard for David, and Joab (as one long ago suggested) had in his possession David's letter—that fearful document he had received, and probably had retained, directing arrangements for Uriah's certain death. This David knew. The

righteous man bowed before the wicked, and sorrowful were the results.

Beloved, let us seek grace so to walk as not to put into the mouth of the world a reproach against Christ and ourselves, and so become weak in their presence.

Prov. xxv. 26.

Doubtless, David found it difficult and painful, even as we do, to have hard and deceitful persons about him, as some of the psalms testify; but what was his trial, or what is ours, compared with that of David's Lord, in enduring for nearly three years the presence, spirit, and ways of him, of whom He said, "One of you is a devil." He did not once name him—that we can trace—to the rest. He knew him, but all his references to him were indirect—"One of you;" "I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen;" "One of you shall betray me," until the direct question put by John, "Who is it?" led Him to point him out—"He it is to whom I shall give a sop," *i.e.*, the *Passover sop to which Judas as a Jew had a right, not the bread of memorial of a broken body*. Having given him the sop, He bade him do that which he had bargained with the priests to do quickly, "and Judas, having received the sop, went *immediately out*."

We suffer from temptation and the presence of evil in proportion to our likeness to God, and consequent nearness (in fellowship) to Him. What then must have been the measure of His suffering under temptation, and at the sight and sound of evil? Surely in all things He is pre-eminent. David was lovely, and so were many others; so also are many now by reflecting His image, but to Him alone belongs the title, "ALTOGETHER LOVELY."

Passing over many and varied circumstances, we find the subject of our paper enquiring of Jehovah, under the pressure of three years' famine, with godly fear, the cause of it. In this David excelled; others, perhaps, surpassed him in other things, but in direct dealing with Jehovah he certainly outshone them.

Surely, dear fellow-believer, we do well to imitate him in this. The only way to be set right and kept so is to come with God's Word into His presence, and enquire. Indeed, it should be our one desire and endeavour to *dwell*, abide in His presence, and enquire respecting His truth and will. Ps. xxvii. 4.

A national calamity had fallen on the people, and David, *exercised* by it, enquired of the Lord. It is in

this way we also must reap the profit of affliction, of trials, being "exercised thereby, we shall afterwards reap the peaceable fruit of righteousness." It is not the number, variety, or depth of trials through which we pass that will profit us or give us real experience—but being *exercised* by them to learn lessons of wisdom, to gain experience of God's love, wisdom, tenderness, patience, and power, the suitability and all-sufficiency of Christ, the aptness and power of the Word by the Holy Ghost.

Beloved, let us see to this.

David uprightly sought Jehovah, and Jehovah showed Himself upright with David. He revealed to him the cause of the famine. "It was for the Gibeonites, whom Saul had slain in his rash zeal for Israel."

But had not the Gibeonites offended against Israel? Did not their fathers deceive Joshua, and lie to the elders of Israel? They did lie, they had offended, but the solemnity of Jehovah's oath was now in question. Saul had violated it; for Joshua and the elders had sworn to them that they should not die; therefore, whatever amount of humiliation and bondage might have been laid on them, they must not be slain. Saul had slain the Gibeonites, and reparation must be made. They were consulted respecting satisfaction for the wrong, and asked for the heads of seven of Saul's sons to be given them, that they might hang them up before Jehovah in Gibeah of Saul. David consented, and fulfilled the condition, saving Mephibosheth, in order to avoid the evil committed by Saul—the violation of the oath—for he had sworn to Jonathan, Mephibosheth's father, that he would show kindness to his sons. He took the two sons of Rizpah, Saul's concubine, with five of Saul's household, sons of Merab, to meet the demand of the Gibeonites. This done, and David (moved perhaps by the devotedness of Rizpah) having honourably buried the bones of all who pertained to Saul, God was entreated for the land, and the scourge was removed.

We next notice David in the battle-field, warring against the Philistines, but fainting in the struggle. Not failing in valour, but fainting from weakness, the result of nearly forty years' care, toil, conflict, and sorrow. Many times had passed over him, each making and leaving its impression on him as a man, as well as tending to perfect him as a man of God; and now has come his last struggle on the field of battle.



At that moment a Philistine giant thought to have slain him, but Abishai, David's cousin, saved him and slew the giant.

Jehovah watched over His anointed, and saved him by the hand of Abishai from death by the sword of the uncircumcised. His men swear that he should no more go out to battle, lest, by being killed, he should quench the light of Israel; and David must retire within a narrower circle and quieter sphere, to do Jehovah's will and serve His people.

Beloved, let us make God's will the spring of delight—not the circumstances involved in that will—so that if after years of activity and publicity for Him He should call us to do the same will—His will more privately and passively—we may be just as happy, saying, "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight."

Although David fainted, Jehovah fainted not, nor grew weary of saving and blessing Israel, for several signal victories were given after this, and in each, one of Philistia's boasted giant warriors fell.

We may now imagine David at rest in his house, reviewing the past, trying to count the mercies of the Lord until numbers fail him; and although not un-mindful of his own weaknesses and faults, yet triumphing in the grace of God, yea, in the God of Grace, his tongue refuses to be silent, and he speaks forth Jehovah's praise.

Beloved in Christ, it is a blessed habit to acquire, that of reviewing the way by which the Lord has led us, and also our ways towards Him, and both in the light of His presence, by faith in the blood. It will tend to sober our thoughts of ourselves, and commend to us that love which never fails nor changes.

We, too, shall praise Him, and our confidence in Him will be enlarged and made more simple.

HENRY HEATH.

THE spirit and tone of your house will have great influence on your children. If it is what it ought to be, it will often fasten conviction on their minds, however wicked they may become. I have felt the truth of this in my own case. I said, "My father is right and I am wrong. Oh, let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" The bye-conversations in a family are, in this view, of un-speakable importance.

## THE FLESH—IT'S CHARACTER AND HOW TO OVERCOME IT.

PAUL says, in Rom. vii. 18, "In me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." So we see here that it is *entirely bad*. Again in Rom. viii. 7, "The carnal mind is *enmity against God*; for it is not subject to the law of God, *neither indeed can be*." And in Jer. xvii. 9, it is called "*incurably wicked, and deceitful above all things*." And in Eph. iv. 22, we see it "*is corrupt*." And in Eph. ii. 1-5 we get it "*dead in trespasses and sins*."

We are, therefore, to have *no confidence in the flesh*, for it is "*a liar*," and from Satan who "*is a liar and the father of it*," John viii. 44; Rom. iii. 4. But what a blessed thing to know, that as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are *completely* delivered from the flesh and its doom by His death, Rom. vi. 6-11, and have been quickened together with Him; and have thus a new nature, entirely apart from the flesh which still dwelleth in us, but which is reckoned *dead and abolished* by the death of Christ; so that we are "*not in the flesh*," Rom. viii. 9, and "*not under the law*," Rom. vi. 14; for the law was given to men in the flesh, and was continually transgressed by them; for the flesh could not be subject to it, being enmity against God, and therefore opposed to the law, which is holy, just, and good, Rom. vii. 12.

But now, believers are born again and have a new life in Christ; and thus they can *delight* in the law of God after the inward man, Rom. vii. 22, the new man which is created in righteousness and true holiness, or the holiness of truth, Eph. iv. 24 (margin). Therefore our daily concern should be to rejoice in the Lord, and to have *no confidence in the flesh*; for man at his best estate is altogether vanity, Psa. xxxix. 5. And Paul, in Phil. iii. 7, 8, speaking of the flesh, says: what was gain to me I counted loss for Christ, and counts it but loss and dung that he might win Christ; although he could boast above others as a man in the flesh. Being in Christ we are delivered from the flesh; we are not in the flesh, Rom. viii. 9; it has no claims upon us; but we are debtors for ever to Jesus, who has saved us from sin in its root, branches, and doom as a corrupt tree, only fit for the fire of hell; and we shall be for ever with Him in the glory, to show forth the riches of His grace throughout the eternal ages, and enjoy the fulness of the riches of His glory. Therefore, having such a blessed place now in Him, and such a glorious pros-

pect before us of being like Him and for ever with Him, how it ought to constrain us to walk worthy of our high calling, Eph. iv. 1. But we can only walk worthy of God as we walk in the Spirit, for it is only by the Spirit that we can "mortify the deeds of the body," Rom. viii. 13, and have the righteousness of the law fulfilled in us, Rom. viii. 4; and the power of the Spirit is only to be enjoyed as we walk by *faith*, for unbelief grieves the Spirit, Heb. iii. 17, and leads to departing from the living God, Heb. iii. 12. So that while we are in this condition of soul the Holy Spirit within us, and by which we are sealed, is *grieved*, Eph. iv. 30, and we being left to ourselves, for the time being, walk in the flesh, for there is no *middle* condition between walking in the flesh and walking in the Spirit. When we are walking by faith, there are three things that the Spirit of God uses to maintain us in our walk with God: *Watching, Prayer, and the Word of God*. When Jesus came to the disciples in the garden and found them asleep, He said to them, "*Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation,*" Matt. xxvi. 41, and added "the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak." So we see here that although the flesh is weak, or without strength, yet God's way to strengthen us in the Spirit, and thus to preserve us from or in temptation, is by our continuing in watching and prayer before Him; which, if neglected, will leave us a prey to the wiles and power of Satan. Now we are prone to separate the two things, and to be unwatchful at one time, and at another time to restrain prayer; and thus we are like a man in a boat, rowing with only one oar, who, instead of making progress, goes round about or is driven back by the force of the wind or tide. Unwatchfulness leads to restraining of prayer; therefore, let us "watch and be sober," 1 Thess. v. 6, and *continue* in prayer, and *watch* in the same with thanksgiving, Col. iv. 2; "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all *perseverance*," Eph. vi. 18, as we are exhorted to "Pray without ceasing," 1 Thess. v. 17. And also let us keep in mind the words of Jesus, "I say unto you *all*, WATCH," Mark xiii. 37. And thus, looking at the figure used above, we will use both oars, and have strength from above, by the Spirit working in our spirits, to overcome and pass through the many waves and storms of temptation and trials that we must expect to encounter as we voyage on our way to the haven of eternal rest; for Satan who is the god of this age, and the prince of the power of the air, will

seek continually to oppose our progress by raising storms in the flesh. But when we are walking in the Spirit we are wafted gently on our heavenward course; we have the power of the Spirit with us, and He keeps the power of sin and the devil in abeyance.

Again, Jesus in praying for His disciples, said: "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy Word is truth," John xvii. 17. So we see here that the Word is to be continually attended to and *obeyed*, if we are to be kept from the power of the flesh. We are clean in one sense for ever by the Word, John xv. 3, that is, we are saved and set apart for God through faith in Jesus; being born again by the "incorruptible seed of the Word," 1 Peter i. 23. But the other side of the truth is, that we are daily to live as separated thus to God through Jesus by His grace; and therefore we get such admonitions: "Having therefore these *promises*, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God," 2 Cor. vii. 1; and also, "giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and godliness," 2 Peter i. 5, 6. And, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy Word," Psalm cxix. 9. Let us therefore be afresh reminded of our utter impotence in ourselves, and have no confidence in the flesh, but by faith walk in the Spirit; and seek daily to maintain that walk by watching and prayer, and feeding on the Word of God; and by really *obeying* its precepts we shall enjoy the promises attached to them, and shall thus "*grow* in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," 2 Peter iii. 18. "To Him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."

W. G. S.

THE cause of enmity against real Christianity is in the heart. The angel Gabriel might exhibit the truth, but the heart would rise in enmity. To suppose that there is any way of preaching the Cross so as not to offend the world, is to know nothing of the subject. There are many *occasions*, however, of calling forth this enmity. Any man who should bleed me would put me to pain, but he would greatly aggravate my pain if he rudely tore my skin. Occasions may render the reception of that truth morally impossible, which, under the most favourable circumstances, is received with difficulty.

## EVANGELISTIC TOUR AMONG THE VILLAGES.

IN the "Northern Witness" of May last, a letter appeared intimating an Evangelistic tour among the villages of Ayrshire, and inviting young men during their holidays to help on the work. In response to that invitation a little band of ten appeared, and with the occasional help of other local brethren, over sixty of the needy villages and hamlets, with numerous farms and country districts, were reached with Christ's Gospel during last summer. A short account of the campaign may be acceptable to the saints, and it may awaken some to their responsibilities in spreading the Gospel in such districts around their own doors, now sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. We have no doubt that the hearts of very many of the Lord's people went with us to the work, who in person could not come, and that many a message went to the Throne on our behalf from those who tarried at home. Others of the Lord's people sent us bundles of Gospel books and tracts for distribution among the unsaved, and others showed us kindness and hospitality—a valuable fellowship in such a work. For all this we praised, and do still praise the Lord.

We mustered at Kilmarnock on the morning of the 30th of June, and after a season of united prayer, we were on the road toward the first of the villages, laden with Gospel literature. One carried a supply of Bibles and Testaments for sale at half price, and another a bundle of warning and Gospel bills, with paste and brush, to decorate the walls as we went along. We looked a feeble few compared with the work before us, and we could scarcely help thinking the love of some had waxed cold toward the spread of the Gospel, and that they had acquired the art of "taking it easy;" but we thought of Gideon's 300, and that Gideon's God was ours, that it was our weakness He could use and not our might, and so we braced up courage, and moved on. In less than half-an-hour we were at work in the first of the villages, visiting from door to door with the King's joyful message. Over 5000 houses were in this way reached and entered with the Gospel. In some only a mere word may have been spoken and a printed message left; and in others, where the anxious and the willing ear was found, a full hour was spent at the people's "own fireside," speaking of Jesus and His love. And how eagerly it was listened to! Here is

an old woman, blind for years. She cannot read the Bible, but has been "seeking pardon" for long. How is she to "*find*" it, unless some one sit down beside her and tell the story simply, and so she hears and believes, and rests from her struggles. There is a poor mother, with half-a-dozen children around her, living away near a colliery, far from "church," "chapel," or "meeting house." She has been "thinking of these things for a long while now," and says sometimes she is "like to lose her reason," but she has no one to speak the word that will set her troubled soul at peace. Sitting with her babe on her knee she passes from death to life, and we praise the Lord together. We might go on to tell of others in a like condition, but let these suffice to show the saints of God that there are hundreds of their fellow-men who do *not* hear the Gospel, and who cannot go to hear it in the ordinary orthodox way. The Master's command must be literally obeyed—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to *every creature*"—it must be carried to them in their homes or wherever they can be found—there must be face to face dealings with them about the realities of eternity.

Hundreds heard the Gospel preached and sung at the market cross, on the village green, or seated in companies around their own doors. On a summer evening, with the rays of the setting sun lingering around, it was to us a pleasant sight to see some hundreds gathered thus, on the hillside to hear the Gospel. Mothers with babes at their breasts, and bare-footed children seated by their side. Husbands and young men half clad, lying or sitting on the grass after a hard day's work in the pit. Many of them told us they had gone "nowhere to hear about it for years. They had no Sunday clothes, and they could not afford to buy any." Kitchens were offered us on all hands, and sometimes three such meetings were going on at once. Where local brethren were found with heart and energy enough to carry on these meetings, great blessing has been the result, but where they found it "too much," they were allowed to droop and die a natural death. Ours was pioneer work, and so we had to press on.

Many others were reached in various ways. Some at their business, like Levi the tax-gatherer; others at the plough, like Elisha; or in their chariot, like the Ethiopian; and at the village well. In short, wherever souls were found, Christ was spoken of, and if the workmen have been guilty of breaking through the

rules of "etiquette"—well, it's time in some quarters they were. Is Gospel work to die of respectability, or are men to be allowed to go down to hell unwarned, because we haven't been "introduced" to them? It is impossible to describe the death that we found reigning in some places. In one village, "the minister" told us he thought the people there were all good enough already, and he was quite sure *he* didn't need to be "born again," he was always a Christian:—he has several hundreds of a congregation to hear this doctrine every Sunday. Another warned his flock against going to hear men who said they were saved.

It was not all smooth sailing. We scarcely expected that Satan would let us invade his kingdom in this way without showing his resistance, but his weapons were quite harmless, and we escaped little worse. We saw fruit, but the full results are with the Master. We shall see them by-and-bye at a time and place when it will be safer for us. So here we leave the past.

But what about the future? Summer is again drawing near, and there is much land yet to possess.

How many more counties then can be reached? and who will come and help to reach them? Some have already offered themselves willingly, and we leave it to the Lord to send others. No doubt it is uninviting work to the flesh, but *the joy no tongue can tell*. We found it so last year, and came home healthier, stronger, and happier than we left.

Here is Wigtonshire with its 17 parishes and 39,000 of a population. Beyond all doubt it is a needy county; and there is Kirkcudbright east of it. Might these two not be reached, at least to start with, during the early part of summer? In the Lord's name and strength, let us try them, say, during the month of June. Will those who mean to go communicate with us early, stating when they could go, and for how long? It is *labourers*, not mere preachers, that are wanted—men with a mind to work for God, and be rewarded of Him. The Lord Himself thrust them forth.

Yours in the Gospel of Christ,

JOHN RITCHIE.

20 PRINCES STREET, KILMARNOCK.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to "prove all things," and "hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.

### QUESTION NO. XIII.

*Is it Scriptural for a Christian to vote for a Member of Parliament, or for Town Councillors, or Magistrates?*

In answer to the above question, we insert the following copy of a letter on the same subject:—

"There is no command against voting in the Word." This I own. Any one, however, who looks carefully and with a subject heart into the Word, really desiring to know the Lord's mind and to be subject to His will, without respect to the opinions of men, and even of fellow-Christians, cannot fail to be struck by the entire absence of anything therein to guide either as to exercising rule or appointing rulers in the world. We read in 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that *the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*;" and in Psa. cxix. 105, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." I find this to be true. I find the Word of God throwing its light upon every law-

ful relationship of my life as a Christian, whether in the Church, the family, my business, or with regard to my walk in the world, though not *of* it. When, however, I attempt to enter the region of politics, I am no longer "walking in the light," but groping in darkness, without a single Divine ray to guide me. I am left there to my own natural intelligence; and the natural wisdom of the Christian is no better than that of the unconverted man, which in God's estimation is *foolishness*, 1 Cor. iii. 19; and thus, in voting according to my convictions, I might be found opposing the purposes of God. Certain it is that there are many Christians who are voting on either side, and as both cannot be right, one section at least must be flying directly in the face of God. Consequently, as the Word affords no light to guide me in intermeddling with political affairs, I cannot class voting among the *all good works* of 2 Tim. iii. 17, and I therefore, as taking the Word of God for my only guide, cannot vote.

I agree with you that it is right to pray for kings and

for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life. Indeed, we are commanded to do this. But I cannot agree with you in your conclusion, that because it is right to pray for this object, it is also right that we should give our voice in the choice and appointment of rulers. It is God's prerogative to ordain the powers that be. "He removeth kings and setteth up kings," Dan. ii. 21. He is quite able to appoint the government which will carry out His Divine purposes without our aid. Besides, we read in Dan. iv. 17, "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it *the basest of men.*" These are not the kind of men whom, in my worldly wisdom, I should vote for, so that even in voting for undoubtedly good men, and against undoubtedly bad ones, it is quite possible I might be opposing the wise purposes of God. I therefore refuse to take upon myself such a responsibility.

You remark that it is the duty of every follower of the Lord to "do good to all men," and to promote their temporal welfare and happiness so far as he can; and you ask, "if it were possible to elect a Parliament which, for example, would abolish strong drink in our country, would it not be the duty of every Christian who finds the Gospel hindered by strong drink to do what he could to get such a Parliament chosen?" I reply—The glory of God must be put before the good of men. If any scheme be put before me, having for its object the good and happiness of men, I must be sure that the said scheme is in accordance with God's Word. How few of us know what is really good for ourselves, far less for all men. God may be pleased to use a bad government, and consequent temporal distress, to the true good of the nation, as He often uses similar means to the blessing of His children. If Christians, instead of mixing themselves up with the world's politics and other worldly associations, and trying to better the moral state of men by legislation, &c., would, in accordance with 2 Cor. vi. 14-18, come out to Christ, to be identified with Him now in His rejection, as they shall be soon in His Kingdom and glory, and take their proper stand in testifying for Him to an ungodly world, the Gospel would soon hinder the drink instead of the drink hindering the Gospel. They would get blessing to their own souls, and be made a blessing to others. The Gospel is the

*power of God* unto salvation, and does not require the aid of legislation, or of teetotalism, or any other humanly-devised means in the blessing and salvation of men; and that God is able to save multitudes of sinners, and to give His own people rest and comfort even under a bad and despotic government is plain from Acts ix. 11, where we find the cause of Christ flourishing in anything but what would seem to us to be a helpful atmosphere. Certainly I would pray that God would restrain and overrule all things to His own glory and to the blessing of His people. We must, however, ask Him for things *according to His will*, and as I cannot know His will in the ordering of the world's government, I cannot, in faith, either ask Him to favour, or lend my influence to, any particular party or cause. I am quite content to let His will be done in the matter. If He gives us a good government and prosperity, I shall be able to thank Him for the blessings of peace and comfort. If he gives us a bad government and "bad times," I can trust in His love and in His power to protect and to provide for His own, and know that it must be for the best, because He, in His infinite wisdom, sees it to be good, though to my ignorance it may seem very bad indeed.

I feel there is so much to say on this subject that I hardly know how to leave off; but I have no time at present to go further into it, though I should like to have said a little about our heavenly calling and destiny, which in itself is surely reason enough why we should not mix ourselves up in the affairs of a world lying in the wicked one, whose god and prince is the devil.

#### QUESTION No. XIV.

"That they without us should not be made perfect," Heb. xi. 40. *Perfect as to what?*

#### REPLY.

The being "made perfect" of this verse undoubtedly refers to resurrection. In the wisdom of God, the resurrection of the saints of the past dispensation awaits the completion of that elect company which is now being gathered by the Holy Spirit to form "the Body," or, to use another figure, "the Bride" of Christ.

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and 36 Baker Street, W.

JUNE,  
1880.

GLASGOW

GEO. TURNER & Co.,  
40 Sauchiehall Street.

## THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

Read 1 Peter i. 10, 11.

**I** THINK it is evident from this verse, to begin with, that it was the Spirit of Christ in the prophets which testified of His coming and of His sufferings and glory. None but God, to whom all His doings are known from the foundation of the world, Acts xv. 18, could possibly have foretold the particulars of the sufferings and glory of Christ as they are found in the Scriptures of the prophets.

In the prophecy of Isaiah, God claims to be believed upon three grounds—chap. xlvi. 18, He is **CREATOR**; therefore He says, “I am the Lord, and there is none else.” Again, ver. 21, He is a **SAVIOUR**; and so He adds, “for I am God, and there is none else.” Lastly, in xlii. 9, 10, “I am God, and there is none like Me, *declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done.*”

Thus the infallibility of the prophetic Scriptures is one mighty evidence that they are Divine. For not only are the sufferings and glory of Christ portrayed hundreds of years before Christ was born into the world, but many other events quite as evidently fulfilled are foretold, such as God’s dealings with the Jewish nation—their present period of scattering, and the desolation of their city and land—all which was plainly foretold, and has become matter of history; whilst even at the present time, that people, beloved for the fathers’ sakes, are a living miracle, bearing witness to the Divine authorship of the Scriptures.

It is not my object at present to prove the Divine

origin of the Scriptures to those who question it, but rather to enquire into what God Himself has said about the relation which the Holy Spirit bears to the Scriptures.

It is plainly stated in the passage we have read that the Spirit of Christ testified in the prophets. Further, this passage also tells us, that so wholly was it the Spirit’s testimony and not their own, that after they had uttered or written their prophecy they began to search into the meaning of that which the Spirit had spoken by them. And this is the distinction between *prophecy* and *teaching*. The prophet spake as the Spirit moved him, and he might be utterly ignorant of the meaning of that which the Spirit gave utterance to by his lips. But the teacher has simply to explain and apply that which is already written.

Turn now to 2 Pet. i. 19. “We have also a more sure word of prophecy;” that is, a “more confirmed” word. Peter had just referred to that transfiguration scene upon the mount, at which only the three apostles, Peter and James and John, were present as witnesses. But the word of prophecy is much more fully confirmed, for it has been borne witness to by saints and martyrs in all ages. Now pass on to ver. 20 and 21. “No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation,” that is to say, it was not of any one’s own private unfolding, it was not brought forth through study or natural foresight; but, on the contrary, “prophecy came not of old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” You see by this how thoroughly the apostle Peter acknowledged that the Holy Scriptures were the dictation of the Spirit of God.

Confirm this by referring to another word of the same apostle, Acts i. 16. "This Scripture must needs have been fulfilled which the Holy Ghost, *by the mouth of David*, spake before concerning Judas." There was Peter's view of the matter. He does not say, "the Scripture that David wrote," though that would have been also true, but draws attention to the great fact that what David wrote was written at the dictation of the Spirit of God.

In further confirmation of this, we have a similar expression used by Paul in Acts xxviii. 25. "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers." Thus Paul also confirms this blessed foundation truth, that the Scriptures were written at the dictation of the Holy Ghost.

Turn now to 2 Tim. iii. 13. "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." Observe, when you begin to deceive, you will soon be yourself deceived; just like Jacob, he deceived his father Isaac, and then he was himself deceived again and again by Laban. When Satan gets the hearts of men turned away from the only infallible record of truth, then he can deceive them in any way he pleases.

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." Let me ask, Of whom have you been learning? The Lord Jesus said, "Every man that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto Me." Have you been learning from man or from God? Have you been learning at the feet of Jesus? We see many turning aside and giving up the truth which once they professed to hold and act upon. This may be accounted for in two ways: either they never learned it from God, and held it in responsibility to Him; or else, like Samson, once they rejoiced in the truth, and did exploits, but they have backslidden in heart, they have ceased to walk in the light, and the darkness has blinded their eyes. They do not now see what once they saw clearly. Let us tremble as we think of it! You and I may see truth to-day, and in a year hence we may give it up.

"And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation." Not wise in the wisdom of this world. There is a wisdom far better than that which enables a man to get on in the world and make a fortune. Nor is it merely the knowledge of the Gospel that is here referred

to: It is rather that the Scriptures are able to make wise unto salvation those who are saved. We have need to be saved from the lusts of our flesh, from the love of the world, and from the wiles of Satan, every day of our lives.

But this salvation is not by the knowledge of the Scriptures alone, but "through faith which is in Christ Jesus." The Scriptures will never make us wise unto salvation apart from real dependence upon the living Saviour at the right hand of God.

I do not read anywhere that we are saved by the death of Christ. Truly we are "justified by His blood," but we are "saved by His life." See Rom. v. 9. He must needs die for me, in order that He might save me, but He is able to save me, because he lives for evermore. It is the almighty arm of the living Christ that I must trust to save me day by day.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." What is here meant by "all Scripture?" Professors of the present day tell us that certain parts of Scripture, for example, much of the book of Deuteronomy, and other portions, are not genuine, not Divine. But this I hold to be contrary to the teaching of Christ and His apostles. Christ took the Scriptures just as He found them, just as they were received and read in the synagogues every Sabbath day. He never raised a question as to certain parts not being inspired. We must get down from the supposed wisdom of the present day to the simplicity of Christ. Just search out the quotations in the New Testament from the Old, and you will see how many books of the Old Testament thereby receive the seal of Christ and of His apostles. If Christ quoted from the book of Deuteronomy, or the Psalms, He set His seal upon them as Divine. Let us take heed how we get wiser than Christ.

The words "given by inspiration of God" are all one word in the original, and might be rendered, "God-breathed." Let us keep to this ground.

Now turn to an expression of the Lord Jesus in John x. 35. "And the Scripture cannot be broken." This was His estimate of the Scriptures. But now-a-days, there are those who would break the Scriptures up in fragments, choosing parts to please themselves, and rejecting others as unworthy of belief. Not so the blessed Master. His words were, "the Scripture cannot be broken." Man's words may be broken, but the Scriptures *cannot*. Now, I will put beside that forcible word "cannot" another verse containing the same



word, Titus i. 2, "God, that cannot lie." The Scriptures *cannot be broken*, because the *God that breathed them cannot lie!* But to show the reverence of Christ for the Scriptures, turn to Matt. xxvi. 53: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels, but *how then shall the Scripture be fulfilled that thus it must be?*" Why would not that blessed One summon the angels to His help? Why does He go patiently and silently to Calvary, as a lamb to the slaughter? Because the Scriptures must be fulfilled; every word written by inspiration of God must stand eternally and absolutely true. Have you and I this reverence for the Word of God? Are we ever found making a jest of Scripture? Would the Lord Jesus so have made light of the Word of God? Let us learn, and remember, that in the Scriptures God has spoken, has breathed out the very thoughts of His heart by the Holy Ghost. God has indited the Scriptures, and we are bound to receive them as really from Him, as if we had heard them thundered from heaven.

The truth of the inspiration of Scripture is not found in the New Testament only; it was equally held by Old Testament saints. See for example Ps. xlv., where David says, "my tongue is the pen of a ready writer." God was the writer. David was but the pen. He spake and wrote as he was moved by the Holy Ghost.

The question may arise, Which of the books of the Old Testament were recognized by the Lord Jesus? Turn to Luke xxiv. 25-27. "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all (not parts, but *all*) that the prophets have spoken; . . . and beginning at Moses"—the books of the Pentateuch—*i.e.*, the first five books of the Bible—those books which modern divines, with their great learning, tell us are not inspired, not genuine, not even written by Moses; "and *ALL* the prophets"—not some, but all the prophets, minor and larger; "He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." And it is a remarkable fact, that it was from the quiver of the book of Deuteronomy—the book that is most assailed by modern criticism—that the Lord Jesus took those three arrows, wherewith He foiled the adversary, when He encountered him in the wilderness.

Mark the commendation given in Acts xvii. 11, to the Bereans. "These were more noble than they of Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily,

whether these things were so." Let the world have its own ideas about nobility. The world considers it noble to doubt and question the Scriptures—the world reckons faith to be childishness. But God says it is true nobility to appeal to the Scriptures, and to hold fast thereby. The spirit of scepticism has come in like a flood. It takes away from us everything in which our poor souls have found rest, and offers us nothing in return but confusion and emptiness. The spirit of "honest doubt" which men respect, is simply contemptible. There is no such thing as "honest doubt" about the Word of God. Men don't want God. They love the darkness, and therefore they hate the light, and doubt and question the truth.

I commend to you very specially those passages where the Lord Jesus refers to and quotes from the Old Testament Scriptures. I cannot give you any higher authority. If you are not satisfied with that, then nothing will satisfy you. I say of you, as the Lord Jesus said of the sceptics of His day—"If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

There are some who will admit, in a general way, the inspiration of the Scriptures, but who deny their verbal inspiration.

I am quite free to admit, that whatever man has to do with is liable to error; and this applies to the translation of the Scriptures, and even to the compiling of the Scriptures, as we now have them from original and ancient manuscripts. In accordance with this, I not unfrequently bring forward a better rendering, which I have heard or seen given by some one who is well acquainted with the original languages.

But apart from such human inaccuracies, the Scriptures, as they came by the lips or pens of "holy men of God," and as they have in the main been preserved and handed down to us, are "God-breathed."

It is absurd to say that they are inspired in the gross, and not inspired in detail.

But to show that the writers in the New Testament recognized the verbal inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures, I would ask you to look at only two passages. The first is Heb. vii. 1, 2.

Here the Mosaic account of Melchizedec is referred to, and observe in verse 2 how many details are taken up and applied. First, the names of this person; the meaning of each name; the order in which the two names occur; first, king of righteousness, and *after-*

wards, king of peace; the fact that no mention is made of his birth, genealogy, or death—these and many other points are noticed in this chapter, proving not only that the writer of the epistle regarded Genesis as verbally inspired, but that he regarded even the *omissions* as Divine and full of significance.

The other passage I would refer to, is Gal. iii. 16, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to *seeds*, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."

This is a remarkable instance; seeing that the meaning of the whole passage is taken by the Apostle to rest on the fact that one word is singular, and not plural. So much for verbal inspiration.

And now, in conclusion, one word as to the inspiration of the New Testament Scriptures. Turn to 2 Peter iii. 15, 16, "And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also THE OTHER SCRIPTURES, unto their own destruction."

By this passage we are taught to place the epistles of the apostle Paul on the very same level with the Old Testament Scriptures; to regard them as of the same authority, and as inspired by the same Spirit.

See also 2 Peter iii. 2, where the commandments of the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour are placed on equal footing with the words of the prophets.

## THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE CHURCH.

(EXTRACT FROM A LETTER).

**I**t is said, "No one dare justify the present state of the Church," and I am sure you will assent to this. It has fallen into apostasy and ruin, and has no shame.

Pentecost, and the descent of the Holy Ghost to abide with us is not cared for; nor the Church's own greatness as God's habitation, and the body of Christ, with its distinct and different members as gifts of the Holy Ghost.

Some of us, through God's mercy, have taken this to heart, and have tried to find our way back, remembering whence we are fallen, and repenting, and seeking

to do the first works. *And not staying by the way, or accepting anything short of its primitive blessings,* we accepted the position given the Church in the 18th of Matthew. However few in number, we embraced the great fact of the Divine presence as the source, root, and spring of all real spiritual blessings, including power to bring down, in answer to agreeing prayer, every favour we could desire for the maintenance of this high position. Finding in the epistles clear accounts of the manifestation and proof of the Divine presence in spiritual gifts, we put conventional ecclesiastical arrangements aside, and re-accepted the forms of worship and ministry given us there, and took the place of those who could—in the power of the Holy Ghost—pray, sing, and minister one to another, the manifold grace of God, according to the various and distinct gifts which God hath set in the Church for the profit of the body of Christ.

Everything denoted a return to the Church's primitive ways and privileges. All unreality was forsaken; and as the apostle said he did not care for the speech of those who were puffed up, but the power—for the kingdom of God was not in word but in power—so we sought to flee from all the forms and speech of Christendom, for the reality and power of God. And so we gave up the prayer-book, for the higher condition of praying with the Spirit and understanding—praying in the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost Himself teaching us to pray according to God, even in silence, with unutterable groanings; and singing praises in psalms and hymns, under the same immediate guidance, making melody in our hearts to God: singing with the Spirit.

As to ministry, we gave up one minister for many, as more worthy of God's goodness, and in the order of the body of Christ.

In a few words of repetition we gave up formality, unreality, and human ideas and sentiments, for the highest blessings with which God's Church was and is endowed. It was true we believed some of the gold of the temple was worn off, and never to be replaced; but the temple remained, and above all He that dwelt in it, as higher than even temple or the gold.

Before long, however, painful suspicions and hesitations arose. Do our meetings display the reverence, order, power and delight which are the necessary results of the Divine presence, if manifested? Do the prayers speak for themselves as of the Holy Ghost?

Is the various ministry really of God? Or are we attributing to the Holy Ghost that which is by no means His doing, and so making unreality more unreal? I often feel that a tract or a book I have read at home about my Lord would be far more consonant with the apostle's words, "Let all things be done unto edifying," than the poor teaching I have listened to.

As to its variety in form, the experience of years has shown me many incompetent men, who, beginning with a few words which one could not put under any of the headings describing gifts in the epistles, have struggled on into some sort of teaching, without any of the power which characterizes Divine ministry.

Neither edification nor comfort come to me, nothing but distress, that we should dare to call these spiritual gifts, and so bring discredit on God's love and care. We gave up, I repeat, formality, unreality, prayer-books, and limited and incompetent ministry, to obtain God's full blessing, and to show others the difference between words and power, realities and assumptions. We sought to learn and follow God's ways in His own habitation, abiding by the primitive way of varied spiritual ministry in the body of Christ, so that strangers coming into these meetings, should spontaneously say, "God is with you of a truth."

But is it so? Oh, is it so? Of old it was said, "God will not hold any guiltless that take His name in vain," and we say, "this is the Voice and act of the Holy Ghost"—"these are His gifts—this is His power in prayer—this is His gift of teaching—this is God's house—He is here—and you may know it by the solemnity, reverence, harmony, and order, and by the power of the Voice that speaks." We have forsaken all for this, and see what we have gained. Alas, we bring no proof to them! It is not bread but a stone, not a fish, but often a scorpion!

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**SPIRITUAL DANGERS.**—A man is in imminent danger when, in *suspected circumstances*, he is disposed to *equivocate*, as Abraham did with Pharaoh, and Isaac with Abimelech. Stupidity of conscience under chastisement; an advancement to power, when a man begins to relish such power; popularity; self-indulgence; a disposition to gad about, like Dinah—all these are symptoms of spiritual danger.—*Richard Cecil.*

## THE COMING OF THE LORD.

**T**HERE can be little question amongst any one of us, whatever be our opinions, that the hope set before the child of God in this blessed book is the *personal* coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God would have all eyes looking out for Him, all hearts waiting for Him, and all desires unto Him. I believe that coming to be *personal* and *pre-millennial*. There can be no doubt \* the Spirit of God in the New Testament sets before us the hope of "His Son from heaven." "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven," and the great Apostle to the Gentiles thus \* describes Christians: "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." That, brethren, is the blessed hope of the people of God. The Lord kindle it more and more in all our hearts!

Again, as we read the New Testament, it seems evident that the apostles themselves expected the return of the Lord in their day. Indeed, so true is this, that we find men who are now striking at the inspiration of Scripture endeavouring to gather an argument from the fact that they could not have been, as they say, inspired, because they were expecting a return of the Lord in their day, which did not take place. Now I gather a very different lesson from this fact. I gather \* that it was the will of the Master that they should live in the constant expectation of His coming, and that it is His will that we also should live in the constant expectation of His coming; and so that, as He said, if He came in the morning, evening, midnight, or the cock-crowing, we may be ready to open unto Him *immediately*.

It is remarkable that the apostles, in speaking of the coming of the Lord, always speak in the first person. \* They do not say, "*They* that are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord;" but they say, "*we*." "And behold, I show you a mystery"—not *they* shall not all, but "*we* shall not all sleep." Moreover, they had the Lord's own warrant directly for this constant expectation of His personal coming. Have you ever observed the last part of the Gospel of John with reference to

this particular point? When the blessed Lord had announced to Peter the manner of death in which he was to glorify God, Peter, seeing John, said, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" And the Lord said, "If I will that he tarry *till I come*, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die. Yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"

So much, in the first place, for tradition. Do not depend upon it. But in the next place it is evident that the Lord infers, and leaves His disciples to infer, that His return might have been within the lifetime of John.

Now, with regard to that coming, I cannot think that such a passage, for instance, as 1 Thess. iv., where the Apostle is comforting the beloved ones with the hope that the Lord will bring with Him those that slept, and that we which are alive and remain shall not go before, anticipate, have any precedence of them, but shall be together caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air, and so for ever be with the Lord—I say, I cannot think that that event is the same as I read in Zech. xiv., where I find Jerusalem taken, the spoil of the city divided, three parts cut off; "and the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." I look upon these as different events. I do not think that the beautiful vision in Rev. xix., where we read of the Lord coming forth, and the armies of Heaven following Him upon their white horses, and "on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords," is the same event as the Apostle speaks of in 2 Thess. ii., "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand." Surely here is a contrast, not a comparison. So far as I know, I always find the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ held forth to His people as a matter of intense jubilee. It is delightful to think, oh! it is delightful, that He who died for us should come to us, that we should embrace those hands, that we should kiss those feet, and that we shall see Him, and be with Him, and be like Him! It is delightful! But the day of Christ is a terrible day, a day of judgment, an awful time of judgment and trial

to those that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Now the objection is sometimes put, "Do you not make two or three comings of our blessed Lord when you take such a view?" If you remember, in the Old Testament there was but one coming of the Lord Jesus Christ spoken of through the long line of prophecy, one grand event foretold; Isaiah lxi. 1-3, will be a familiar illustration; but when we come to the fulfilment, we look more as on lines drawn across, and we see the details.

Brethren, in one great sense He has never gone away from us since He bowed the heavens and came down. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Moreover, there is a sense in which it may be said He comes to every individual soul when it is unclathing itself and going up to God. And if I mistake not, I have seen scores of dying saints bearing unmistakable evidence to the fact, that the King was waiting to carry them in His own loving arms to the haven where they would be. But, of course, while this is so, we do look for that grand and glorious manifestation of the Son of God, when not individually only, but when all the redeemed shall be caught up, the living changed, the dead raised—to be for ever with the Lord. But I cannot for a moment allow, that we are at liberty to confound the death of the believer with the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some would say, that when we are told to watch for Him, it is all the same whether it is for death or for the Lord. There is a vast, and a glorious contrast between the two events. When death comes, *death conquers me*; when Christ comes, *I conquer death*. When death comes, the mortal puts on *mortality*; when Christ comes, the mortal puts on *immortality*. When death comes, the corruptible puts on *corruption*—"bury my dead out of my sight;" when the Lord Jesus Christ comes, the corruptible shall put on *incorruption*, and we shall be changed.

Well now, a word about the signs of His coming. I know there are signs, but my strong and solemn conviction is, that we sometimes overlook where the signs *are* to be found, and we look for signs where the Lord has not promised them. In Luke xvii. 20: "And when He was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them, and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there!

for behold, the kingdom of God is within you." I read of signs like these: "It shall come to pass in the last days that perilous times shall come, when men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." I read of the time "when men shall be turned away from the truth, and turned to fables," and when there shall be, instead of the doctrines of the Gospel, the doctrines of demons. Brethren, *these* are signs, and verily they abound; but when we come to the passage in Matt. xxiv. I differ from some of my brethren. I think that the Lord there is speaking of a special coming, and is giving special signs. I wonder it can be overlooked that, in the end of chapter xxiii., He had just said that which had given rise to the questions in the 24th. Having wept over Jerusalem, He says, "Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Then the question is proposed to Him by His disciples, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming and the end of the age?" and as I understand the signs then given, they are the signs connected with the grand coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, when He comes with all His saints, as set forth in Zech. xiv., 2 Thess. ii. 8, and Rev. xix. 11. This opinion is very much strengthened by remembering what the Lord says, Matt. xxiv. 15; comp. verse 21, about the abomination of desolation being one of those signs. Now in Dan. xii. 1, 2, we are distinctly told, "At that time thy people shall be delivered," and a resurrection of the dead shall take place. But when Jerusalem was taken by Titus, there was no deliverance, and no resurrection. St. Luke, who wrote for the Gentiles, as Matthew did for the Jews, makes no allusion to "the abomination of desolation standing where it ought not," but of Jerusalem being compassed with armies; quite a different thing, which, as I believe, is often confounded with the other. This refers to an historic event; and the Christians did take notice, did flee, and did escape.

"But one day with the Lord is as a thousand years." We speak of the promise of His coming, and of the day of His coming; but that day has a morning, has a noon, has an evening; and I verily believe that our time in our Lord's coming will be the morning—the

best time of the day. Before the sun rises we shall go up to meet Him, and when He returns we shall come with Him, and when He reigns we shall reign with Him. "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" What a destiny there is before the children of God! When the King comes, the Bride comes; and when the King sits and executes judgment, we sit with Him and execute judgment. Oh! "would to God that ye did reign, that we might reign with you!"

I find the Lord has left three parables describing the progress of His return—the parable of the Virgins, separating professing Christians from real ones; the parable of the talents, dealing with service; and the parable of the sheep and the goats, or the gathering together of the nations.

I find He gives three illustrations as to the manner of His coming:—"as it was in the days of Noah." Ah! brethren, not a drop of rain fell till Noah was safe in the ark. The world outside knew not. We are told that "they did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all." God had shut up Noah, and "even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed." I love to think of this, and to realize and believe that God will shut me in before the great deluge sweeps, with destruction, the earth. "Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all." We know that not a single spark fell upon Sodom until Lot was safe in Zoar. "I can do nothing till thou be there." And the sun was risen upon the earth: they were eating and drinking, marrying and given in marriage—not indeed in Sodom, mark the distinction between the two—in the days of Noah they were marrying and given in marriage, though not so in Sodom—and then destruction came upon them all.

The other illustration is seen upon the Mount of Transfiguration. "Ye shall see the Kingdom of God come," said Jesus; and He took up Peter, James, and John, and He was transfigured before them. This was His own illustration of the Kingdom. There was a representation of the risen dead in the person of Moses—for Moses was buried, and yet he was there. There was a representation of those who shall never die—for Elijah never died, and he was there. And

the theme of their discourses was "His decease, which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." And that shall be the theme of the glorified saints by and by: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." And when He was come down from the mount there were His servants who ought to have been faithful, but they could not cast the devil out of the poor child, and that because of their unbelief.

So it was when the Lord came down with Peter, James, and John, and He cast out the devil, He taught us a third aspect of the wonderful progress of the establishment of His Kingdom. I find in keeping with these thoughts three distinct falls of Satan spoken of in Scripture. First of all, cast out of heaven into the air; by and by he will be cast out of the air down to the earth, and he will "come down in great wrath, knowing that he has but a short time;" and when his work is accomplished on earth, then he is taken, chained, and cast into the bottomless pit.

During the progress of the development of the Kingdom of God, also, there are three dispensations, and I do not think they ought to be overlooked. For instance, when the Lord was here on earth, what was His one object? It was to glorify the Father. It was the Father's dispensation. Everything He did His Father sent Him to do. He was here as the servant of His Father, for He came to save the world. It was: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Again, when the glorious work was done, and He had ascended to the right hand of God, His first act was to send the Holy Ghost, and what is He doing? He is glorifying Christ; lifting up the Lord Jesus Christ; and just as He is so lifted up, the people are drawn to Him; and, by and by, when He has gathered out His Church, there will be another dispensation. Then shall be the Millennium. The Christ of God shall return to the earth, to reign before His ancients gloriously. The King shall reign in righteousness; the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the face of the sea; and in every place a pure offering. And yet, oh! brethren, if it were not written, who could dream of it? we are told that when the thousand years are ended Satan shall be loosed, and he shall go out to deceive the nations, and those that submitted not to the sceptre of the Son of God will range them-

selves under his banner, and come up against the saints. I say there is a dispensation of glory to bring out this fact, which God grant may be written more and more in our hearts now, that except a man be born of the Holy Ghost, not even the reign of Christ would convert his soul. Finally, the Scripture closes with three trumpet blasts, as it were—"I come quickly," Rev. xxii. 7, 12, 20. These are things that are profitable to meditate upon.

Now what the blessed Lord mainly said, let me repeat in His name, "What I say unto you I say unto all, WATCH." Brethren, it is the natural position for the Bride of Christ to be found waiting for her Husband. A faithful bride will watch for the return of her lord. It is the holiest position, for every man that hath this hope purifieth himself, even as Christ is pure. What is the hope? "That when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Three things—He shall appear; we shall see Him; we shall be like Him. It is the best hope; and, dear brethren, it is the happiest position. If I am waiting for my Lord, the things of this world cannot perplex or trouble me. Sorrows will seem but short. "Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Tears may be shed, but He shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. Oh, it is the happiest and best position! God grant that if He come before we part (and I solemnly say it; I dare not think otherwise; I solemnly believe He may come before we part), brethren, if so, let us be found watching, let us be diligent to be found in Him, without spot and "blameless," that we be not ashamed before Him at His coming.

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THERE is too much system. I used to study commentators and systems, but I am come almost wholly, at length, to the Bible. Commentators are excellent, in general, where there are but few difficulties, but they leave the harder knots still to be untied. I find in the Bible, the more I read, a grand peculiarity, that seems to say to all who attempt to systematise it: "I am not of your kind. I am not amenable to your methods of thinking. I am untractable in your hands. I stand alone. The great and wise shall never exhaust my treasures. By figures and parables I will come down to the feelings and understandings of the ignorant. Leave me as I am, but study me incessantly."—*Richard Cecil.*

## GENESIS.

**G**ENESIS is a name taken from the Greek. It is the title of this book in the Septuagint translation, and signifies "the book of generation or production." It is the first book of the Pentateuch or "Five Roles," and contains the history of about 2,369 years, and may be divided into three parts. 1. From the creation to the deluge. 2. From the deluge to the time of Abram. 3. From the call of Abram to the death of Joseph.

Chapter i. sets forth God as the Creator, but man the chief in creation, having dominion and lordship over all: figure of Christ, the Second Adam, yet to be fulfilled. Phil. ii. 9-11; Rev. v. 12, 13.

Chapter ii. This chapter begins with the rest of God in the first creation, on the seventh day, or the "Sabbath" which was known by the children of Israel, Exod. xvi., and commanded by God to be kept holy, Exod. xx. 8-17; type of an eternal Sabbath, a rest which sin shall never mar or break, Heb. iv. 9, and the believer's portion now, Heb. iv. 3; Matt. xi. 28, and to be enjoyed while on his pilgrimage below, Matt. xi. 28-30. The first rest is obtained by faith, Heb. iv. 3; Rom. v. 1; the second by submission, Matt. xi. 29, 30; Phil. iv. 6, 7. Eden signifies "pleasantness" or "delight;" and the garden in it was of the Lord's own planting, Isa. li. 3; Ezek. xxviii. 13; typical of the paradise of God, which we find recorded in the New Testament, Luke xxiii. 43; Rev. ii. 7. "The tree of life also in the midst of the garden;" the great antitype of this tree is Jesus, John i. 4; xi. 25; Rev. xxii. 2; Prov. iii. 18; xi. 30; the reward to the overcomer, Rev. ii. 7. In the tree of life we see God as sovereign. "The tree of knowledge of good and evil;" man as responsible and under obedience: both were united in Christ. He is the "Life," and the one who was charged with our responsibility; He fulfilled the law unto "righteousness," and was obedient unto death, "even the death of the cross," Phil. ii. 9-11. The "river;" the antitype of this is seen in Exod. xvii. 5; 1 Cor. x. 4; John vii. 37, 38; Rev. xii. 1. Adam and Eve; type of Christ and the Church, John xii. 24; 1 Cor. xii. 27; Eph. v. 30. Eve brought unto Adam; figure of the Church, presented when complete, Eph. v. 27; Rev. xix. 7: a future thing.

Chapter iii. Satan's temptation and Adam yielding to the tempter: see the contrast in the "Second Adam," Luke iv; Phil. ii. 5-11. Judgment passed, but provision made for the ruined condition of fallen man (ver. 15 and 21); the "seed" of the woman, "Christ," Gal. v. 4, and His

sacrificial work foreshadowed in the "coats of skins," Isa. liii. 7-10; 1 Cor. i. 30, 31.

Chapter iv. is man sinning against man, his brother, the fruit of the fall. Cain signifies "possession;" Abel, "vanity:" two worshippers, one false, the other real. Cain, the false worshipper, slew the true worshipper, Abel his brother; type of Christ slain and put to death by the Jew, Acts vii. 51, 52. Cain, type of the world-system worship, *without* blood; Abel, the household of faith *with* blood.

Chapter v. Enoch, a figure of the Church caught up, 1 Thess. iv. 17, 18, and illustrative of faith as to its walk down here, 2 Cor. v. 7.

Chapters vi. to ix. From Adam to Noah we have the age of lawlessness; man's apostasy and wickedness judged by the flood. The ark, a type of Christ; Noah, of the faithful remnant preserved and kept through the great tribulation, Rev. vii. Hence we have two distinct dispensational truths figured forth: Enoch, that of the Church "caught up" *before* the tribulation; Noah, of the remnant preserved *after* the Church is taken away. The supposed meanings of their names are significant: Enoch, "initiated;" Noah, "rest." The "raven," illustrative of the carnal mind and heart, "fleshly," "earthly;" the "dove," of the renewed mind and heart, and "spiritual life." The "olive branch," emblematical of peace, Rom. x. 15. The "bow" appointed by God; His covenant with creation, founded on sacrifice. We look at Noah as a type, but we see him also as a sinful mortal; the close of the 9th chapter proves this. Shem and Japheth exhibit the Divine method of dealing with sin; Ham, the human, Rom. iv. 8; Luke xv. 30. Thus we have Noah's prophetic utterances concerning his three sons and the future family of mankind, distributed into *three* great divisions: "Shem," signifying "name," Isa. ix. 6; Phil. ii. 9-11; "Japheth," "widely extending," Eph. iii. 14, 15; Rev. xxi. 1-5; "Ham," "black," "noisy," or "multitude," Gen. xi. 9; Matt. xxvii. 20-26; Psalm xxii. 12-16; Rev. xx. 11-15.

Chapter xi. The history of this present world given. Its rise and progress through the instrumentality of the descendants of Shem, Japheth, and Ham. The building of Babel, and the confusion of tongues: here "Babel" is a city, that in Revelation a "system"—both opposed to God and His people. See the contrast of this in Acts ii.—what the Church was in its infancy; what it is her privilege to be *now*, 1 Cor. i. 10, 11; and what she will be in the *future*, John xvii. 20-23.

Chapter xii. The call of Abram, and the promise of God to him, including the promised *seed*—Christ, Acts iv. 12; Gal. iii. 16, which was absolutely without condition: thus he builds an altar, and worships, calling upon the name of the Lord, 1 Cor. i. 26; 2 Tim. i. 8, 9; Heb. iii. 1. Then the end of this chapter tells us his failure in going down to Egypt, where he erects *no* altar, and tells Sarah to say that she is his sister: a kind of picture of the sad history of the Church which has gone down into the world, denying her calling and Lord.

Chapter xiii. Here we have Abram recovered in soul and back again to "Bethel," "house of God"—compare with this chapter, 2 Tim. iv., Abram and Paul, men of *faith*; Lot and Demas, worldly Christians, or the heavenly and earthly choice; Sodomites and Alexander, evil and wicked workers.

Chapter xiv. Abram, the man of faith, victorious over the confederate kings of the Gentile, and the Melchizedec priesthood: a beautiful millennial picture of future glory yet to be fulfilled in Christ, who is for us *now*, after the *pattern* of Aaron, and after the *order* of Melchizedec, Heb. vii. 11-21. Abram refuses to be made rich by the king of Sodom, 2 Kings v. 20. "For His name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles," 3 John 7.

Chapter xv. Abram's faith rewarded by the declaration of God to him respecting the earthly "seed;" and their ultimate possession of the "land" confirmed by a covenant—the "smoking furnace," fire of affliction, Isa. xliii. 1-3; John xv. 18-21; and the "burning lamp," a light to guide, Psalm cxix. 105; Prov. vi. 23.

THERE are seasons when a Christian's distinguishing character is hidden from man. A Christian merchant on 'Change is not called to show any difference in his mere exterior carriage from another merchant. He gives a reasonable answer if he is asked a question. He does not intrude religion into every sentence he utters. He does not suppose his religion to be inconsistent with the common interchange of civilities. He is affable and courteous. He can ask the news of the day, and take up any public topic of conversation. But is he, therefore, not different from other men? He is like another merchant in the mere exterior circumstance, which is least in God's regard: but in his taste!—his views!—his science!—his hopes!—his happiness! he is as different from those around him as light is from darkness. He waits for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who never passes, perhaps, through the thoughts of those he talks with, but to be neglected and despised!

## NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.

BY MR. HENRY HEATH.

IF I mistake not, one word, short, and easily remembered, in a hymn that we have sung, will comprehend the whole profit resulting from the teaching of to-day. In this hymn, Jesus is spoken of as giving to the weary *REST*; and who but those who have tasted its sweetness can imagine the fulness and richness of that little word "*rest*." Let me fix it on your mind by reading a few passages in which it occurs.

Scriptures read—Gen. ii. 3; Zeph. iii. 17; Jer. vi. 16; Matt. xi. 28; Phil. ii. 5-9; Heb. iv. 3, 9.

Our rest, which though implied, is not distinctly stated, is God's own rest in His own blessed affections, and in the simple and absolute certainty of the accomplishment of all His words. Father, Son, and Spirit mutually delight in one another, and rest in the absolute accomplishment of every purpose which He wills to perform.

Gen. ii. 3, I need not tell you, is the rest after the six day's arrangement of matter, and the formation of man, the masterpiece of creation, and woman in man. There is a little word here we do well to notice, "He rested *from* all His works." Not from fatigue; not that His mind needed to be refreshed through rest; but He did all that He intended to do, and ceased. The *Sabbath-day* is always connected with the earth, and we get no mention of this Sabbath until Israel comes on the scene. There is intimation of rest in the days of Noah, when the dove was sent out of the ark, but found "*no rest*," and returned. But there is no mention of a Sabbath. It is always connected with God's dealings with the earth.

Pass on to Zeph. iii. 17: "He will rest *in* His love"—not *from*, as in creation. Here we have the higher, the gloriously perfect rest of redemption. God rested in His love for the object of that love: and so, dear young believers, God rests in His love to you. This of course applies to Israel, and will have its completion by-and-by, but the principle is the same. God has found in Christ, and in His finished work, a rest which gives Him satisfaction, and delights His heart; and it is here you and I find rest.

"We who have believed do enter into rest." God rested from creation the seventh day; and the Lord Jesus Christ ceased from the toil of redemption when He said, "It is finished;" and now poor sinners,



hearing of the finished work of Christ, cease to work for salvation, life, and peace, and rest in it. I believe this is the first rest mentioned in the 14th chapter of Matthew. "I will give you rest;" "Ye shall find rest to your souls;"—a rest *given*, and a rest *found*. Some of the worst "Sabbath-breakers" in G— are those who rigidly observe the first day of the week. Why? Because they make observance of the first day a thread in their garment in which they seek to appear before God. We who have believed do enter into rest, and now have with God a perpetual rest in the Son of His love. There is also a perpetual Sabbath in store for the people of God.

Jer. vi. 16. We have been reminded of the time God delivered His chosen from Egypt, and brought them through the Red Sea. When Moses failed to take them into the land, He raised up Joshua. "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh; God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." The law-giver was the law-breaker, and could not bring the people into the land; but what Moses failed to do, Joshua did.

Then we are reminded that when God had brought His people out of Egypt, and had borne them on eagles' wings unto Himself, far removed from Egypt, He said to Moses, "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." At certain times they were called by the silver trumpets, and we were told who had title to respond; but remember, all this referred to the time when Israel was one—before the apostasy—before the schism—before the rending of ten tribes from two. God was pleased in His mercy every now and then to bring about a revival; and from time to time to raise up His servants to stir up His people to seek His face. Now Jehovah spoke to His servant Jeremiah—"Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your souls." What were the good ways? Jehovah's ways. What were the old paths? The paths of obedience to His Word. What were the new ways? Israel's own self-willed, self-devised ways. And what the new paths? The paths of idolatry and declension from their God. And God's word was, to seek out the old ways—the good ways. And so, beloved, we get in Acts the formation of that wonderful thing called "the Church;" and at Antioch we see the grace

of God in bringing Jew and Gentile into one body in Christ, of which He is the Head; such a sight as neither heaven nor earth, man nor angel had ever seen. As in Egypt, Israel formed one assembly without any division; so when the Church was formed they were all one, denominations and denominationalism did not exist. These are the new ways of Christendom, carnal and self-willed ways; and if, in the days of Josiah, the voice of Jehovah was heard in Israel, saying, "Seek out the old paths, and ye shall find rest to your souls;" the voice of the Head of the Church, through His own Word, comes to you and me, and bids us consider what He formed at Pentecost—what the Spirit of God set up then; and compare with that what exists around us now. Oh, what paths of human devising, self-seeking, insubjection to the Head! Now what are we to do? The only answer is that we find in this passage, "Ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein." Young believers, it is not what some tell us, a matter of little importance what we are associated with, where we meet, how we worship. Oh, no! This word gives directions and examples to test *everything* around us, and to see which comes nearest this Divine model; and we are bound in faithfulness to Christ, and for our own rest, and peace, and blessing, to walk therein. Another thing, young believer, you have not only come to Christ to be saved, but you have gathered around Him, who has saved you, as your LORD; therefore His will is to rule, and His Word to guide you. Bow your neck in subjection to that Word, and bear His yoke and you will find rest to your soul. Remember the people thus gathered are absolutely in separation from all denominations and denominational titles. We are not gathered separate from Christians; our affections embrace every true-born soul. Otherwise we commit a great sin, for what a sin it would be to multiply denominations. If we do not gather in obedience to Christ, and in absolute separation from that which men set up, we are the rankest sect under heaven. Why do we reject other names than His Name? Because they produce schism. The only name that unites is the Name around which we gather. Sinners are not saved to do as they please. We are saved to obey the Lord, who saved us; the standard by which we are to judge is His Word, therefore let us bring all we see around us to the test of it. We are called to take His yoke upon us, and learn of Him; that is, yoke

yourselves with Him, tread the path He trod; and lest you be in doubt as to the path He trod, the Epistle to the Philippians tells us: from the bosom of the Father, down, down to the dust of death, He who was God, not "made Himself God," but "made Himself of no reputation." That is the yoke. Coming down lower and lower in our own estimation, patiently pursuing the path He pursued. He was subject to His Father, and enjoying at that moment what He promised, "*rest*." "Take this yoke upon your neck which I am wearing, subjection to the Father; and you will find, as I do, rest to your souls."

Search out the passages in the Scriptures where the word "*rest*" occurs. It will richly repay you for your search. You will find that God has rested; and that Christ has rested; and that God has found for Himself, and Christ for Himself, rest; and the weary sinner coming to Christ gets rest; and the obedient Son "finds rest" unto his soul. God make us more and more obedient. One word covers the whole life of Christ, embraces it all, and that word is *obedience*. "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I might take it again. . . . This commandment have I received of My Father," John x. 17, 18. "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me. But that the world may know that I love the Father, as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do," John xiv. 30, 31. The Lord help us in these difficult days to take heed to His Word, that we may find rest to our souls.

CHRISTIANITY is so great and surprising in its nature, that, in preaching it to others, I have no encouragement but the belief of a continued Divine operation. It is no difficult thing to change a man's opinions; it is no difficult thing to attach a man to my person and notions; it is no difficult thing to convert a proud man to spiritual pride, or a passionate man to passionate zeal for some religious party; but to bring a man to love God, to love the law of God while it condemns him, to loathe himself before God, to tread the earth under his feet, to hunger and thirst after God in Christ, and after the mind that was in Christ—with man this is impossible! But God has said it shall be done, and bids me go forth and preach, that by me, as His instrument, He may effect these great ends; and therefore I go. Yet I am obliged continually to call my mind back to my principles. I feel angry perhaps with a man because he will not let me convert him. In spite of all I can say he will still love the world.

## NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.

BY MR. J. G. M'VICKER.

**R**EAD Rom. viii. 32, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

That is one of the unanswered and unanswerable questions of the Bible. We little know what our salvation cost God; the infinite self-denial and self-sacrifice brought before us in His gift. Do you see the tenderness in these words—"His *own* Son"—not merely "His Son?" We know how a man's heart cleaves to his son, and after all, what is a man? But think of what it was for that great God to deliver up His own Son to die on the cross for us! He spared Him not—He held the cup to His lips by His own hand. You remember that unutterable scene in Gethsemane, when He said, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." After our good God making such a sacrifice, there is, shall I say, no escape for Him from giving anything to us. I heard a brother say, "If God would refuse us anything after having given His Son, it would be saying, 'I did not spare my Son, but will withhold this'—thus putting a lesser blessing above His Son!" He could not do it. After the Cross, anything that God gives us is like that verse in Genesis i. 16, "And God made two great lights; the greater to rule the day, and the lesser to rule the night: He made the stars also." The greater first, the lesser next, then after having made sun and moon, it was, so to speak, easy for Him to make the stars. Is there not something humiliating about our unbelief? "He has given His Son, but there is some little thing that He has promised, and I am not sure if He will give *it* to me." Is it not cruel for brethren thus to distrust God? That the gift of His Son should produce no more confidence in our hearts than that?

Psalm xxxii. 8: "I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shall go: I will guide thee with mine eye." Is that plain? Do not look at it carelessly; if it was a cheque for twenty or thirty pounds you would be careful. But it is far more precious—it is one of God's cheques. Of course it is to the man who has made God his hiding-place. Do not take it out of its connection. "I will guide thee with mine eye." Is God going to do it? "I did not spare my Son, did

I? I delivered him up for you to the curse, and the sin-bearing, and the wrath, did I not? *Am I going to give you this guidance? Am I?* What do our hearts say? Oh, brethren, let us exercise faith; and when we come to two roads, not knowing which to take, let us wait on God.

Luke xxi. 12-14, "But before all these," etc.; "Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer." It is one thing to have that in the Bible, and another, to take it out of the Bible by faith. Had these disciples been brought up before kings or magistrates, and had they occupied the night before preparing a little speech, they might have said, "We have the promise of God, still it will be a good thing for us to make a little preparation beforehand." In spite of their saying that, it would just have shown that they did not trust God. Have we settled it in our hearts that God will give us this guidance? We have the written Word and the living Spirit to apply the Word to our daily life. When you don't know what to do, don't do you know not what. Wait. *No light*, is God's command to stand still till you get light. If we settle in our hearts that God, who spared not His Son, will give us the light we need, God will guide us; but not till we exercise faith in Him. As the Lord Jesus said to that father, in the 9th chapter of Mark, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Heaven and earth will pass away, but the word that God has spoken to faith, never. It is impossible for God to fail in His promise.

Matt. vi. 31-34. Here is a plain promise from the Lord, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things (meat and raiment) shall be added unto you." This does not refer to preaching; it just means what it says. If a man has a business, the kingdom of God is for him to attend to his business. If he neglect his business in order to preach, he is not helping forward the kingdom, but will break down, and the name of Christ will be dishonoured. Whatever the Lord has given us to do, let us accept the service, and do it to Him. Some Christians, when they get into trouble, let a rich brother know. That is not letting God know. God does not mean that one son should hang upon another, but all should depend on their Father. If any of you had children, and one of them went to a neighbour to seek help, instead of coming to you, you would be grieved at his want of confidence in you. Will not

our good God keep his promise in some way or other? I remember reading of a witness for Christ in Holland, who was pursued by his enemies, and took refuge behind a stack of wood in a farmyard. He had to remain several days in his hiding-place, and would have starved, had not God sent a hen who every day laid an egg within reach of where he was, and thus his life was preserved. God can make *any* creature minister to his servants. I know that God tries His children, but trials are one thing and broken promises another.

I remember the faith of God's children was tried when they heard of Allan Gardiner and his company dying for want of food. Was the 6th chapter of Matthew unfulfilled? I know that dear Allan Gardiner was a true servant of God; I am not saying one word against him or those that were with him, but still, men get up societies, and go out to labour for the Lord, trusting in these societies. All I can say is that a society is not God. The Word of God must stand, and the lesson I would learn from this incident is, that it is better to trust in the living God than in the best human organization in existence.

There are many precious promises, such as, "Ask and it shall be given you," and, " whatsoever ye ask believing, ye shall receive," etc., etc. Remember that your kind God has promised. Settle in your heart the right thing to ask, and take care that the promise gets to God's ear. We know we are not speaking to the air, but to our good God. We have asked something according to His will, and for His glory, and are we going to get it? *He gave His own Son*, and now it is a mere trifle we are asking from our Father. I count upon it that God will certainly do what He has promised. There is not a trial we can get into but that there is a promise of God that will fit us in that trial. There are promises to me, whilst I stand up here, that I can rest upon, such as Exod. iv. 12, "I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say." There is no promise made to an individual servant, that every other servant has not a right to lay hold on in similar circumstances.

Learn to live a life of faith. There is nothing we need that God is not able to provide, at the right time, in any possible or imaginable circumstance. Lay hold upon His Word. Did you ever do it in vain? I challenge you to show a promise He has not performed! Not since creation has any human being done it, or ever could do it.

THE Christian, in his sufferings, is often tempted to think himself forgotten. But his afflictions are the clearest proofs, that he is an object both of Satan's enmity and of God's fatherly discipline. Satan would not have man suffer a single trouble all his life long, if he might have his way. He would give him the thing his heart is set upon. He would work in with his ambition. He would pamper his lust and his pride. But God has better things in reserve for his children: and they must be brought to desire them and seek them; and this will be through the wreck and sacrifice of all that the heart holds dear. The Christian prays for fuller manifestations of Christ's power and glory and love to him; but he is often not aware that this is, in truth, praying to be brought into the furnace: for, in the furnace only it is that Christ can walk with His friends, and display, in their preservation and deliverance, His own Almighty power. Yet when brought thither, it is one of the worst parts of the trial that the Christian often thinks himself, for a time at least, abandoned. Job thought so. But while he looked on himself as an outcast, the Infinite Spirit and the Wicked Spirit were holding a dialogue on his case! He was more an object of notice and interest than the largest armies that were ever assembled, and the

mightiest revolutions that ever shook the world, considered merely in their temporal interests and consequences. Let the Christian be deeply concerned, in all his trials, to honour his Master before such observers!

A LADY proposed to me a case, which seemed to decide against those views of religion called evangelical. She knew a most amiable girl, who was respectful and attentive to her parents, and engaging and lovely to all connected with her; who had, however, no objection to seeing a play: and had certainly nothing of that, which she knew I should call religion: but she asked if I could believe that God would condemn such a character to everlasting misery. Many persons view things in this way. They set themselves up to dictate to God what should be done, on points which He only can determine. If these persons are ever cured of this evil, it must probably be in some such way as that by which it pleased God to teach Job. Job could assert his integrity and his character against the arguments of his friends; but when God asked, "*Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?*" Job prostrates his soul with this declaration—"I have heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to "prove all things," and "hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.

### QUESTION No. XV.

*What is the teaching of the first clause of 1 Cor. xv. 42, "So also is the resurrection of the dead?"*

#### REPLY.

The Apostle has been illustrating the great truth of resurrection by reference to nature. The man who does not see a type of resurrection in every seed that is sown, and in every blade that springs therefrom, is called "a fool."

But not only does he contend for the truth that there is to be a resurrection of the dead, seeing Christ has risen; he also teaches by the diversity and variety of the first creation that the new creation will be not less diversified.

There will be in the resurrection still the earthly and the heavenly. So it is written, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the

first earth were passed away," Rev. xxi. 1. And there will be a resurrection people—fruit of the travail of the Lord Jesus—to inherit both, to witness eternally in both heaven and earth to the value of His redeeming blood.

That is the meaning of the "celestial" and the "terrestrial" of verse 40. There will be a special glory suitable to the heavenly department of the kingdom, and also a glory pertaining to the earthly. The Church will have its own heavenly glory, and Israel will have their appropriate earthly glory.

Again, as amongst the natural heavenly bodies there are differences of glory—the sun, moon, and stars all differing from each other—so will there be diversities of glory in the heavenly resurrection company.

The saints will be like Jesus; but Jesus the Lord of Glory shall have the pre-eminence, even as all

natural glories fade before the glory of the sun. And each saint will be invested with a glory peculiar to himself, and we cannot doubt that this will be measured according to individual faithfulness while serving the Lord on earth. Life is the portion of all believers, but a crown of life is promised to some, James i. 12. Righteousness is the portion of all believers, but a crown of righteousness will be granted to some, 2 Tim. iv. 8. Glory will be granted to all believers, but a crown of glory is held out to some, 1 Peter, v. 4.

The righteousness, the life, the glory are ours, and cannot be alienated from us, but there is the solemn exhortation, "Let no man beguile you of your reward," Col. ii. 18; "Let no man take thy crown," Rev. iii. 11.

#### QUESTION No. XVI.

*Is it Scriptural for sisters to pray audibly in a prayer meeting?*

#### REPLY.

The one who prays audibly in a public meeting for prayer, composed of Christians both male and female, is in so doing *leading* the assembly. It is therefore a public and prominent act, and 1 Tim. ii. 8 is distinctly applicable, where the *men* only are called to such service.

A meeting composed of women only is of a different and more private character.

#### QUESTION No. XVII.

*What is the Christian's position with respect to benefit Clubs, such as Foresters, Trade Clubs, Factory Clubs, which provide for sickness, accident, or being out of employment?*

#### REPLY.

Nearly all such Societies involve the element of partnership, or the "unequal yoke," in some way or other, whereby the believer is bound to act with the unbelievers. An honest application of 2 Cor. vi. 14, will in all probability be sufficient to sever the Christian from such associations.

#### QUESTION No. XVIII.

*Who are the "witnesses" spoken of in Heb. xii. 1?*

#### REPLY.

We believe the witnesses here referred to, to be those mentioned in chap. xi., and all such as in the former ages had by faith proved and borne witness to the faithfulness of God. These are spoken of as compassing us about in order that we who shall join that company by-and-by may now be encouraged to press forward.

Then, in harmony with this, our eye is directed to Him whose whole life was begun and finished in faith, and who is therefore set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Finally, those to whom this epistle was written are exhorted to remember those who in their own day had led and guided them in the path of faith, "whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation," Heb. xiii. 7.

#### QUESTION No. XIX.

*What is meant by "manifesting the one body?"*

#### REPLY.

As this is not a Scriptural expression its meaning can only be definitely obtained from those who make use of it.

That the "one body" in its entirety, of which Christ is the Head, will be "manifested" with Him when He comes in glory to reign, we fully believe. For the prayer of the Lord Jesus, John xvii. 22, 23, must be answered.

In the meantime it is only by walking in subjection to Christ as Lord and Head, and by love in the truth to all saints, that we can in our little measure give expression to the great Divine fact, "there is one body."

**HELENSBURGH.**—Believers in the Lord Jesus meet for the "Breaking of Bread" at 11 o'clock, every Lord's Day, in the Hall, 28 Colquhoun Square, Helensburgh.

**ROTHESAY.**—The Christians formerly meeting in the Name of the Lord Jesus, in the Masonic Hall, Rothestay, have removed to the New Public Halls, East Princes Street.

**GREENOCK.**—The Christians formerly assembling in the Gospel Hall, Waverly Lane, Greenock, have now removed to Octavia Hall, West Blackhall Street.

**SALFORD.**—Believers in the Lord Jesus who formerly gathered for "Breaking of Bread," at the Christian Mission, Ordsall Lane, Salford, will henceforth meet in Gospel Hall, West Park Street, Ordsall, at 10.30 a.m., every Lord's Day.

**ABERDEEN AND NORTHERN TRACT DEPOT.**—I take the present opportunity of intimating that I have now Removed from 35 Richmond Street to 51B LOCH STREET, which is a more central part of the town, and will be found more convenient for those who wish to help in the spread of the Gospel in Tracts and Books. I may also say that I have always a selection of Bagster's and other Bibles, Enlarged London Hymn Books, &c., in all their different bindings, in stock, which will be sent post or carriage free.

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## THOUGHTS CONCERNING FELLOWSHIP.

By J. R. C.

1. **T**HE word rendered "fellowship," contains the idea of "partnership," or "joint participation." It is rendered variously—for example, "communion," "contribution."

2. The believer in Christ Jesus is at once introduced into fellowship with the Father and the Son, through the Holy Spirit. 1 John i. 3.

3. The peace-sacrifice in the Old Testament affords Divine illustration of this: part was laid upon the altar—this was God's portion; part was eaten by the offerer—representing the believer's portion; and part pertained to the priest—representing Christ's own satisfaction and joy in His own redemption work.

4. Thus it is that God the Father brings the sinner into fellowship with Himself. The moment he trusts in Christ, he finds in Him his peace, his joy, his rest, his food, his satisfaction. Christ is "the bread of God," and the bread given by God to us: this is fellowship. God rests in Christ, we rest in Christ: this is fellowship. God gives us to drink of the river of His own pleasures: this again is fellowship. Apart from Christ fellowship with God is impossible. Only as He is seen, believed in, enjoyed, fed upon, is communion with God really experienced.

5. Although this fellowship is the common heritage of all believers, few enjoy it experimentally in any degree worthy of the privilege. In fellowship with God there is "fulness of joy." See 1 John i. 4. This joy is independent of circumstances. See 1 Thess. i. 6; 1 Pet.

i. 7, 8. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace IN BELIEVING," Rom. xv. 13. This is God's way of bringing into fellowship with Himself—it is "IN BELIEVING."

6. The great hindrance to communion with God being enjoyed by faith is not scepticism—we all believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God. The real hindrance is indifference to the glory of God.

7. It is true, and well it is, that "God is love;" but when the apostle is writing concerning fellowship, his message is not that "God is love," but that "God is light." Fellowship with God can only be enjoyed by those who are walking in the light. "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth." 1 John i. 6.

8. The Word of God is "a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path." When our feet are in the truth of God's Word, our souls will be in the light of God's presence. It is folly to talk of communion with God, and to use such high-flown language as "unbroken communion," unless our feet are being planted in the footsteps of Christ.

9. Indifference to God's glory begets indifference to His Word. The soul then gets entangled with cares, anxieties, perplexities, and divers lusts and pleasures. These are the atmosphere in which the rank and bitter root of unbelief springs up and flourishes. Fellowship with God, and the faith that fills with peace and joy, are impossible to the careless and carnally-minded. Hence it is that many who have long been Christians are almost strangers to spiritual joy, until they are on their death-bed, and every earthly prop is removed,

and every earthly hope and pleasure blasted—then Christ becomes very precious to them—and there is a yielding of the will to God; God is glorified at last, and their souls are filled with light, “with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

10. Such is “the communion of the Holy Ghost.” The Spirit of God alone is the power for such fellowship. If He is grieved, then fellowship with the Father and the Son cannot be enjoyed. Alas! that such a precious portion for our souls should be so lightly esteemed! That “fulness of joy” as a present experience should be bartered for vanity and vexation of spirit, by those who have known the Lord!

11. Out of fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, springs “fellowship one with another.” Divine fellowship among believers can only be enjoyed in proportion as they “walk in the light.” Every believer has the capacity to enjoy fellowship with God, and consequently with those who are walking in the truth. Truth is light. Error is darkness. God cannot stoop to walk in error with those who set aside His truth. If we are to walk with God, it must be in the light, that is, in the truth. “Fellowship one with another” is conditional on the same. “If we walk in the light as He is in the light, THEN have we fellowship one with another.”

12. The fellowship of Christians may, for the sake of clearness, be looked at as corresponding to three circles. The largest circle being what we might call the fellowship of LIFE; the next the fellowship of THE ASSEMBLY; and the most circumscribed of all, the fellowship of SERVICE.

13. Being in possession of Divine life, that is, “being born again,” and therefore having the Spirit of God dwelling within, constitutes the capacity for fellowship, which ought to be felt and enjoyed, no matter when or where or how Christians may meet. They are washed in the same precious blood—they are beloved of the same Saviour and God—they are quickened by the same life—members of the same body, of which Christ is the Head—and journeying on to the same eternal home. How natural then, and how good in the sight of God, that those, who by His grace alone have so much in common, should enjoy mutually, and share with each other, the precious thoughts and experiences that only such can know!

14. But every thought and motion of the flesh is antagonistic to the development of this fellowship of

Divine life. The pride of life, the love of the world, spiritual conceit, sectarian bitterness; these and other developments of the carnal mind, are destructive of fellowship, and produce separation and alienation among Christians.

15. But within this fellowship of life there is a definite circle of fellowship, called the “ecclesia,” or the church. In the epistle to the Ephesians we have the Church according to God’s eternal purpose and Divine workmanship. The hand of man is not seen in connection with its construction in this epistle. It is the body of Christ—the temple of God—growing unto an holy temple in the Lord, builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. Eph. ii. 21, 22. In 1st Corinthians the Church is seen as committed to human responsibility. Men are the builders; and according as they make use of gold, silver, precious stones, or of wood, hay, stubble, they edify or spoil (destroy) the temple of God. 1 Cor. iii. 10-17.

16. At first, ere apostasy from the faith and headship of Christ had done its work, “all that believed were together,” Acts ii. 44. It will hardly be questioned that every believer, every child of God in Corinth, was recognized as forming part of the assembly there. This is evident from the address of the epistle. Chap. i. 2. Whether it was at Jerusalem, amidst the apostate remains of the Mosaic economy, or at Corinth, amidst heathenism, two things were true of the Church; it included all believers, and it excluded all others. Of course an ungodly one might creep in unawares, or on the other hand, a believer on account of sin might be put away; but such exceptions as these only prove the rule.

17. But certain of the later epistles, speaking concerning the latter days of the dispensation (Notably 2 Tim.; 2 Peter; 2 Thess.; 2 and 3 John; and Jude) foretell, and even describe as already begun, a state of things far different. False teachers having introduced false principles among the saints, so perverted the churches from the right ways of the Lord, that instead of bowing to the authority of the Lord by His Apostle Paul, as in Corinth, See 2 Cor. vii. 11-16, they turned away from him and from the truth, 2 Tim. i. 16; and in another case would neither receive the Apostle John, nor his authoritative instructions—the epistle closing upon a scene of indescribable sorrow and confusion—the church ruled by one who loved the pre-eminence—the Apostle not received—the brethren cast out. See 3 John.



18. Such is the beginning of "the falling away," or "the apostasy," which is foretold in 2 Thess. ii. 3, as that which must come to prepare the way for the Man of Sin. Immorality there was in Corinth, but that was not "the falling away;" false doctrine also there was of the most serious kind, but that was not "the falling away;" for still there was room for the Word of the Lord to rebuke and correct; the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ in His own house had not been rejected—His Apostles were acknowledged, their authority owned, their instructions submitted to, as from the Lord Himself. The ministry of the Spirit of God, though perverted, had not been set aside and supplanted by that which was altogether of man;—hence there is not such a thought to be found in connection with the evils that abounded in the Corinthian Church, as turning away from it, but rather the fixed purpose to visit it again, and not to spare those who had not repented at his rebuke. See 2 Cor. xii. 20; xiii. 1, 2:

## A HIGH PRIEST OF GOOD THINGS TO COME.

HEBREWS IX.

**T**HE worship of Israel, under the law, was on a principle of far greater distance from God than that of the fathers, when they sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange land. Wherever Abraham went in the land, he found room to pitch his tent, and build his altar; and there he called on the name of the Lord. The intercourse between Abraham and the Lord was much more free, and much more confidential, than any Israelite under the law could possibly attain to. Abraham knew the Lord only in grace. It was grace which had called him from his idolatry, and it was grace which had made him so many precious promises. On this ground Abraham could stand before the Lord, and plead with Him for Sodom, although he was himself but dust and ashes.

To man's eye, the service of God connected with the tabernacle would be thought an advance in the order of worship on the rude altar of the fathers. But the order of the tabernacle was, in fact, restriction on the liberty of worship. And yet it is to this that the human mind so constantly and naturally turns. This is the pattern which man proposes for himself; the necessary consequence of which is, that his worship is

in the spirit of bondage. A devoted Israelite, though he stood purified as to the flesh, might have looked back with regret on the far happier and nearer worship of the fathers. After all that the high priest had done for him, he could only approach the outside of the tabernacle, he dare not enter within. The law, in all its institutions, preserved that element which was so conspicuous at its promulgation—bounds were set around the mountain, lest the people should break through to gaze. Near and intimate approach to God was unceasingly denied by some divinely appointed bound.

It is, indeed, true, that an Israelite enjoyed nearness to God, when compared with the inhabitants of the nations around him; for the world having fallen into idolatry after the flood, God had given it up to its own lusts; and having called out one nation, and constituted that a nation of worshippers of the true God, He thus distinguished them from all other nations of the earth. Thus Israel nationally stood before the Lord, and worshipped Him, whilst all other nations bowed before their idols.

But although, compared with others, Israel stood so nigh, they were nevertheless denied, by the most solemn statutes, free access to the presence of their God. They must approach with measured steps, never passing the appointed limit. There was the outer circle of a worshipping people, and the inner circle of worshipping priests; while nearest of all, and the only one who dare draw nigh, the high priest ministered alone in the holiest. Thus while Israel, as a nation, was taken from all other nations as God's peculiar heritage and witness, yet it was within that nation that God fixed the clearest testimony, that no way was yet opened into the holiest of all. Distance and restriction were most forcibly taught amidst the only nation brought nigh.

But Israel has become corrupt; and as God gave up the Gentiles to their lusts, so has He scattered for a time His chosen nation, and set aside its polity. Now, corruption in worship, has almost always consisted in re-establishing what God has disowned. Just, therefore, as natural religion is the assertion of man's ability to take that place before God as a creature, which as a sinner he has lost, so national religion is the return to Judaism which God has disowned. People-worship without, and priest-worship within, is not now the order of God; nor has God now any other worshipping

nation than that which is formed by the whole body of believers, called out of every nation, and people, and tongue, to worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

But let us come to the tabernacle itself, to learn what is God's present order of worship, and what are the good things to come, which are now freely given to us. We have already noticed that there were in Israel the worshipping people outside the tabernacle, and the worshipping priests within. It is with the latter we have now to do; for our present good things constitute blessed contrasts, even to the then privileges of the priests themselves. Let us dismiss, therefore, from our minds, the people worshipping without, whilst priestly ministry was accomplished within, and let us fix our attention, as the Holy Ghost in this chapter leads us to do, on the tabernacle itself, and the priestly family serving in its holy places.

The tabernacle was of most exquisite beauty. This could be discerned in some degree even by the eye of an outside worshipper. But the holy place, in which the priests habitually ministered, was furnished with the exquisitely wrought golden candlestick, the table of shew-bread overlaid with gold, and the golden altar of incense. These things their eyes constantly looked upon, and they must have felt that they were amidst things peculiarly belonging to God, though denied entrance into that holy chamber in which God's glory visibly dwelt. They must always have felt that they were near to God, though never immediately in His presence. From the holiest of all, the beautiful veil still separated them. Into that most holy place, within which were the golden censer, the ark of the covenant, and the cherubim overshadowing the mercy-seat, they never entered. They had no access to the mercy-seat. There was one indeed, the high priest, who had access even there—who could pass within the veil, and minister before the mercy-seat itself in the actual presence of God. But this was only once a year. At all other times Aaron could only minister among his priestly family in the holy place. Bounds were thus set, not only around, but also within the tabernacle, and set, not only on the priests, but even on the high priest himself.

Now, let us well mark the comment of the apostle on this order of worship. "The priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God; but into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered

for himself, and for the errors of the people: the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing." What could more forcibly testify, that the way into the holiest was not yet manifest, than facts, such as that none but priests could enter the holy place; and that those very priests, so constantly serving there, could never pass on into the holiest; and again, that the high priest himself must not enter "at all times" into the holiest, but only "once a year?" Enough, indeed, was permitted to constitute the tabernacle, and its order, a "shadow of good things to come;" but that tabernacle ever testified to those who worshipped in it, that it was but a figure for the time then present, and that it knew of no service by which, as to the conscience, they could be made perfect. Its holies were not thrown open even to those who had services appointed them therein—no liberty to go in and out was there allowed—no way to the mercy-seat, free to all, or open at all times, could be found there. The annual solemnity of the great day of atonement must indeed have been bright in prospect, not only to the people and the priests, but to the high priest himself; but after it was over, it must have been a day much regretted, especially by him who had for that day such peculiar access unto God, but who was afterwards cast into comparative distance from God to exercise his ministry outside the veil. Aaron's highest privilege was of very seldom occurrence—only once a year.

But the Holy Ghost declares that now the way into the holies is open, through Jesus, the High Priest of good things to come. The redemption found by Aaron in the blood of bulls and goats did not avail to give access to the mercy-seat, nor to purge the worshippers' conscience; but Christ has found "eternal redemption;" and having thereon entered into the true holies, He has become the High Priest of those most precious "good things," liberty and peace in the presence of God. As long as the first tabernacle was standing, these things could not be known—no redemption had been found on which they could be based—no high priest anointed by whom they could be ministered. The whole order of that first tabernacle spoke of restriction, not liberty; and so far from providing purgedness of conscience, its very offerings for sin brought the remembrance of sins upon the offerer.

And what then must be the consequence of taking

the pattern of that tabernacle as the model for the worship of Christians? Must not the holiest, that is, the very presence of God, be barred against their approach? This must be so, even if they are allowed to be God's holy priesthood. But as this is not allowed, but only a certain class are admitted to be priests, the holy brethren must be denied all place whatsoever within the holies, and kept, like the congregation of Israel, without. Take the tabernacle and its order as the pattern instead of the contrast of Christian worship, and these consequences must result; and have they not abundantly resulted? Do we not see the laity without, the priestly clergy within? And are not souls fettered, and consciences unpurged, just as though the High Priest of good things to come had never entered on His blessed ministry at all?

But that High Priest has come! He is now the minister of the holy things; and, therefore, the blessed testimony of the Holy Ghost is, that "the good things to come" are present good things to faith. And what "a good thing to come" made present to us, that our abiding-place is now the holies, with the veil rent and thrown open, so that the mercy-seat is ever open to us, and the countenance of God ever lifted up upon us! What a present consequence to us of eternal redemption having been obtained, and of our great High Priest having passed into the heavens! The priests in the tabernacle might have looked back to the freer communion with God enjoyed by the fathers, or they might have looked forward to a still more blessed thing, even the day when Israel shall nationally be a kingdom of priests, according to the promise, "Ye shall be named the priests of the Lord; men shall call you the ministers of our God;" but between these good things passed away, and good things not yet come, they stood fettered and unpurged. But what they then looked forward to as a good thing yet to come, is substantiated to us at present, because Christ has already entered on His ministry as the High Priest of good things to come. All Israel's blessings are suspended on Israel's new order of priesthood—of which priesthood the High Priest alone is actually in His heavenly place of ministry, His fellow-priests (that is, all who believe in His name) ministering there now only because He appears in the presence of God for them. But these priests do now, by faith, enjoy present liberty and perfect peace in that most holy presence, though still, as to fact, sojourning and serving on earth. Israel

nationally may be still beneath judicial darkness; the nominal church may be blindly, though industriously, groping amidst its own patterns of God's shadows; but the High Priest of the good things themselves having come, faith receives from His hand its rich and living portion, and renders back its praises unto God. But let us look at other contrasts drawn in this chapter by the Holy Ghost.

As to the way in which the holiest of all was entered on the day appointed for that solemn service; how many preliminaries had to be attended to by Aaron. First, he must himself be provided with a sin-offering and a burnt-offering, as well as take of the children of Israel two kids of goats for a sin-offering, and one ram for a burnt-offering. Then he had to bring the bullock which was for himself, and to make an atonement for himself and for his house. This being done, he took a censer full of burning coals from the altar before the Lord, and put the incense on it, that the cloud of the incense might cover the mercy-seat; and under the shelter, and amidst the fragrance of this, he sprinkled the blood of his sin-offering both upon and before the mercy-seat. But his work did not end here. He had to go out again, and to go through the same service for the people, offering their offerings as he had his own. And when the services of that day were completed, he must go out from the holiest, and again be occupied with his ceaseless round of ineffectual offerings—the holiest of all being closed against him until another year had run its course. Now, mark the contrast to all this. "But Christ, being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holies, having obtained eternal redemption."

The Holy Ghost evidently delights to glorify the Lord Jesus. Others might have been anointed, but He is The Christ—The Anointed One. That appellation belongs to the Son, as it belongs to no other. It is "Christ," then, who is now present in His own place of ministry, as "the High Priest of good things to come." To enter into His place of ministry, He has passed through a far greater and more perfect tabernacle than that through which Aaron passed into his peculiar place of service. Christ has passed through the heavens. Man's hands were not employed to make these; they are the handy-work of God Himself. Christ is gone

into heaven itself: there, in the immediate presence of God, He appears for us. On earth He was not a priest; no tabernacle ever existed on earth suited to so great an High Priest as Jesus the Son of God. Man's hands may not rear a place of ministry for this High Priest. His person and His sacrifice demand a sphere of ministry suited to their value, and hence His tabernacle is "not of this creation." The attempt to honour Him with costly things made with hands, is to forget the dignity of our High Priest, and the heavenly order of His priesthood.

J. L. H.

### EXCOMMUNICATION.

**E**XCOMMUNICATION we esteem to be the most solemn act of the Church. It is the fearful severing from itself of one of its own members—so tainted with sin, so hardened in guilt, that he is deemed unfit to be recognized any longer as a Brother. He is ranked with those that are without; he is, as it were, handed over into the regions of Satan's almost unrestrained power; and God Himself in heaven ratifies the sentence, if it be rightly pronounced by His Church on earth. It is to the recognized spiritual existence of the member in the body of Christ, almost what death is to the natural existence of a man in society on earth—the closing of his connections, his ties, and fellowships, and intercourse with those around. And whatever some may truly say, as to the ruined and fallen condition of the Church, we suppose there are few (except those whose consciences are altogether hardened) who would not, if excluded by the feeblest two or three meeting in the name of the Lord Jesus, and righteously acting in obedience to God's Word, feel the solemn weight of those things which God has written respecting excommunication, resting on their souls.

Previous to the exercise of such a power, what caution, and what grace is needed by those who fear they may be compelled to use it. What patience in seeking to restore rather than to sever—what carefulness that nothing be done out of partiality—what desire that the sin of the individual may be felt as affecting the whole body, and be mourned over and confessed by themselves. And if the power must be exercised, how needful still that it should be guided by love—how needful still to remember that

the Lord has given it for edification, and not for destruction!

See, beloved brethren, how the apostle Paul felt and wrote in this matter, in his two epistles to the Corinthians. Observe how he dreaded even to come to Corinth, lest he should find among them that which he might have to rebuke, or those whom he would be unable to spare. "I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth,"

2 Cor. i. 23.

We learn from the Word of God that four things must concur before this last act of dis severing power is exercised.

1st. The sin must be clearly such as is numbered among those unrighteousnesses written of in 1 Cor. vi. 10; Gal. v. 19-21. These, and other similar passages, sufficiently indicate the nature of excommunicable sin.

2nd. The sin must have been palpably and distinctly proved against the individual, so that there may be no doubt on the conscience of any as to his guilt.

3rd. The individual so found guilty must be hardened and unrepentant as to his sin.

4th. It must be the act of the whole Church, so that no question could arise in the conscience of any godly saint as to the propriety and necessity of the sentence.

And herein, we need scarcely say, consists the difference between a majority of saints concurring, and the consciences of all the saints agreeing to the act. It will not do in excommunication for a majority only to concur, for that is not the action of the whole which is the action only of a majority. If valid at all, this act is the result of the Holy Spirit's presence in the body, preserving holiness in its midst. It is because God refuses to have a defiled Temple—it is at His command—it is through His power—that the evil person is put away. Where His Spirit acts there must be unanimity; and where, therefore, this power is rightly used under His direction, it is used by the whole body putting away from among themselves the wicked person. The Word of God having defined the sin, His Spirit necessarily leads the consciences of all in the action; for they are not led in it by their own will, or by their own feelings, but by His Spirit in obedience to the Word.

Proved and unrepented sin judged by the saints meeting, even if their whole number were but three,

would command and ensure the concurrence of all godly saints everywhere, according to the unity of that one Spirit.

Extraneous aids are not sought when we feel that the ground of Scripture is firm under our feet. And the blessing and power of an action, guided by the Spirit of God, is, that it necessarily commends itself to all those in whom that one Spirit dwells; it admits of no questioning; it savours of God, and finds its way therefore to every spiritual conscience.

H. W. S.

#### NOTES ON NUMBERS vii., & 2 CHRON. vii.

**W**HEN the altar was dedicated in the wilderness, and the princes of the tribes of Israel offered each one his sacrifice, the tabernacle was sanctified by the glory. This accorded with the promise made before to Moses, Exod. xxx., conditional on the instructions for the continual burnt-offering throughout their generations, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. There, as above the mercy-seat, Exod. xxv. 22, where the shed blood was sprinkled, time after time God met with Moses, and there He communed with him of all things that were to be given in commandment to the children of Israel. And in the day of the dedication of the temple, when Solomon offered sheep and oxen "that could not be told or numbered for multitude," we read that the glory of the Lord filled the house, so that the priests could not enter in to minister because of the cloud, "because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house." The cloud which covered the tabernacle, for guidance and defence during the wilderness journey, rested within the temple—giving us a double figure of what Christ is *for* and *to* His people.

Thus we find that while the revelation of the glory was given on the ground of the blood shed and sprinkled, the measure of it was according to the riches of the Offering foreshadowed—the One Sacrifice to which every type and figure pointed. We get the same thought underlying the individual offerings. Lev. v. 7: "And if he be not able to bring a lamb (margin, If his hand reach not to the sufficiency of a lamb), then he shall bring for his trespass which he hath committed, two turtle doves or two young pigeons, unto the Lord." And ver. 11, "If he be not able to bring two turtle doves or two young pigeons, then he that

sinned shall bring for his offering the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a sin-offering." Also in the law of the leper (chap. xiv.), we read: "If he be poor, and cannot get so much (margin, His hand reach not); and in ver. 31: "Even such as he is able to get." Thus we see that while grace accepted the small measure, yet it must be counted to the offerer according to the estimation of the priest. This we find also in chap. xxvii. 12 (margin), concerning the accounted value of the offering: "According to thy estimation, O priest, so shall it be."

Now we know the Jews were an earthly nation, worshipping in a worldly sanctuary, offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sin. God had separated the tribe of Levi from among the children of Israel for Himself, instead of all the first-born amongst them, to minister in the service of the tabernacle; and of the tribe of Levi the family of Aaron was sanctified for the priesthood, Numb. viii. 18. But now Levi has passed from the service of the earthly sanctuary, and God has chosen us, a church of first-born ones (Heb. xii. 23—Tregelles translation), every one a priest, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

God's Lamb has offered Himself without spot, opening through the veil (that is to say, His flesh) a way for believing sinners to enter into the holiest of all once and for ever by the blood. Still the revelation of the glory as given by God is according to His estimation of the sacrifice. And thus it is no longer a cloud abiding on the tabernacle, or even filling the house, but the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. No longer a veil needed, for we all with unveiled face behold. Nor yet as the high priest entered once a-year, not without blood, while the first tabernacle was yet standing; for the blood which gives us access is that of the "better sacrifice," by which the heavenly things themselves are purged—and the Lamb by whom we enter is ever there for us.

Israel failed to keep the first covenant, and sinned away the presence of the glory, and we trace in Ezekiel's vision the cloud, lingering as it departed from the threshold of the house to stand above the cherubims, and from the midst of the city above the cherubims to the mountain on the east side of it. But the covenant of God in Christ is unchangeable and eternal; and "if that which is being done away

was with glory, much more that which *abideth* is in glory," 2 Cor. iii. 11—Aldorf's translation. Yet is not the measure of our apprehension of the value of the offering always the measure of our realized blessing, as well as of our joy in the revelation of the glory to our souls. The portion given to every saved one is Christ, even as in Egypt, every Israelite within the blood-sprinkled door ate of the lamb of the Passover. But as in the gathered manna and the slain lamb, each one took according to his eating, so it is now. God spreads the table in the wilderness. He invites, but He does not compel His guests.

All fulness dwells in Christ. God's value of Him is infinite. The Jews valued Him at thirty pieces of silver. What do we value Him at? How far can we enter into God's estimation of His beloved Son? Thus far is our acceptance as worshippers—thus far are we accounted to have brought to God that in which His soul delights. "Righteous Abel" was commended because he offered unto God *a more excellent sacrifice* than Cain, *by which* he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of *his gifts*—not of himself. We find here a truth to which God is ever faithful: not only that we are accepted on the ground of the blood-shedding, which is the first principle of the gospel of Christ, but that our fellowship with Him in apprehending the value of the offering, is the measure in which it is counted as our own, and also which is laid to our account as being offered by us to God. Every Jewish offerer was accounted as under the shadow of the coming Sacrifice: and each one accepted in its infinite value was afterward perfected by the actual offering up to God of His beloved Son. See Heb. xii. 23, last part, and x. 14.

Thus every believing sinner is alike accepted in Christ, and saved from wrath through Him. But the value of the typical offering was another thing. It might be a bullock, a lamb, or a turtle dove, according to the offerer's conception of the sin to be atoned for, or of the riches possessed. And thus our need as priests to God in a spiritual kingdom, is to enter into deeper fellowship with Him as to the costliness of the One Offering given for our ransom-price, as well as to be our rich eternal possession. So shall our joy be full, and He will be glorified in us; for it is the presence of the glory that sanctifies: not that anything in our hearts is different—only that Christ is there.

A. E. W.

## FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.

CHAP. XV.—THE SONG OF REDEMPTION.

"O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever. Let the REDEEMED OF THE LORD say so, whom HE hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy" (Psalm cvii. 1, 2).

"And they sung a *new* song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast REDEEMED US to God by Thy blood" (Rev. v. 9).

"IT is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord: it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely," Psalm xcii. 1; cxlviii. 1. But before any one can praise God they must first know Him; and ere any one can give thanks unto the Lord, they must first receive some benefit from Him.

To praise an unknown God, or to give thanks to one only known as "hard and austere," always demanding and exacting, would be an impossibility. To ask a mourning heart to sing, or a soul in bondage to praise, would be to mock them. Deliverance must be known and enjoyed—salvation must be accomplished and accepted, before a burst of praise can escape the sinner's lips, or a note of thanksgiving ascend to God. Every question must be settled, and every foe met and conquered; the conscience must be at rest, and the heart filled, ere we *really* reach the praising pitch. And all this is seen in the song of the fifteenth of Exodus. It is the first recorded song of Scripture; it was sung by a people saved; and the time of their singing was immediate, and consequent on their salvation. It is good to know all this; for many now-a-days sing who had better weep; and groans would be a truer expression of their heart than songs. In the previous chapter this singing band are seen in terror, their enemies are around them in power, and they cry out in fear, but cannot sing. How could they, in the very jaws of threatened death? But now the tables are turned, the foe is gone, the victory has been won, and they stand delivered—looking back on the field of battle, and proclaiming the praises of the Victor. The order given is, they *saw*—they *believed*—and then they *sang*. Exod. xiv. 31; xv. 1. And again, "They believed His word, they sang His praise," Psalm cvi. 12.

And this is just where praise comes in; it is after salvation, never before it—this is always the order of Scripture. The feet are first taken from "the horrible

pit and the miry clay," and then the "new song" fills the mouth. The prodigal receives his father's kiss of love, and sits down decked at the loaded table; then they begin to be merry, and the music and dancing are heard without. Philip goes down to dark Samaria and preaches Christ; the people believe the word, and there is great joy in that city. Acts viii. 8. And the Ethiopian sees in the fifty-third of Isaiah Jesus, and goes on rejoicing. Acts viii. 39. The story is the same, and so is the order, in every case. Salvation comes first—the joy of salvation and its song follow after.

Beloved reader! Is this salvation yours? I mean, can you truthfully take up the language of this song, and say, "He is *my* God;" "He is become *my* salvation." The ungodly can talk of "our Saviour;" and, like the demon-possessed damsel at Phillipi, they can speak of "the men who show unto *us* the way of salvation," and yet remain Christless. But the young convert's first and sweetest song is, "Jesus is mine, and I am His." He can sing with David, "The Lord is *my* rock, and *my* fortress, and *my* deliverer; *my* God, *my* strength, in whom I will trust; *my* buckler, and the horn of *my* salvation, and *my* high tower," Psalm xviii. 1. What a constellation of "mys!" it is all personal; it is all sure. No "hoping to be saved;" no "thinking it presumption to be sure" here; nor in the song on the sands of the Red Sea! Indeed, such people never praise the Lord at all, nor do they worship Him. Praise is the overflow of a heart filled with a consciousness of God's love and grace; it can only come from one in the enjoyment of God's salvation. Crowds of religious men and women may sing psalms and hymns Sunday after Sunday—there may be the most orthodox language used—the most entrancing music—the most perfect arrangement and harmony—and yet, if the company be unsaved, if they have never seen "the salvation of the Lord," if they have not passed through the Red Sea, the whole affair is a solemn sham, a piece of mockery, an abomination to the Lord; for so long as a soul is "dead in trespasses and sins," it cannot praise, nor should it be invited or encouraged to try it—"the dead praise not the Lord," Psalm cxv. 17. The most daring insults are offered to the God of heaven under the pretence of praise. The most solemn scenes of the "Messiah's" sufferings are set to music, and sung by hundreds of careless sinners, and applauded by thousands more! The death-agonies of the Son of God are brought forth

in a popular form, to please the revolted taste of wicked men, and soothe their consciences into forgetfulness of the day when the murdered One and the murderers shall meet; and the scenes of the "Judgment Day" are turned to ridicule in song, accompanied by the whistling of an organ; and worse than all, God's redeemed ones are not clear of the open shame, nor are they separate from it! O! if they would only think of the tenderness of the heart they so rudely pierce by this unhallowed work—of the depth of the darkness and woe that He passed through to make them His, and to separate them from the world that cast Him out—how different all this would be!

Beloved reader! we entreat of thee to ponder this. O treat it not lightly; but in the shade of the Cross, and in sight of that bleeding Sufferer, ask, "Is it I?"

We write specially for the young believer, and upon him we urge the solemn responsibility laid upon him by God, to stand clear of these works of darkness. We do so the more plainly, because we have seen the youthful feet of the lambs of the flock of God led into the path of the wicked, and the snare of the devil, through such religious entertainments, when they would not have been so by the openly ungodly concert or opera. In the one case it was the devil undisguised, in the other the same devil dressed in the garb of an angel of light, and supported by his servants in the uniform of "the singers of the house of the Lord," who dwell in His presence, and are employed in His praises by day and by night. 1 Chron. ix. 33; Psalm lxxxiv. 4.

Look, too, at the subject of this "new song." It is all about Jehovah—the glory of His person, the greatness of His power. "The Lord is my strength and song." "The Lord is a man of war." "He hath triumphed gloriously." Not a word about *self*; not a syllable about what *they* had done. This is worship. And the new song of heaven shall eternally be, "Worthy is the Lamb." Singing one's own experience or attainments is not worship, even were it true, which is not always the case; for our experience is often varied; but Jesus is for ever the same; His glories are unchangeable; and the Father's ear is ever open to hear them told out in His children's praise. May we gratify His heart by offering Him such praises here, while our feet are amid the thorns of the wilderness, as we shall more fully, when amid the ransomed multitude our voices mingle in the song around the throne, gazing on the face of the Lamb—

"And there our song shall ever be,  
The Lord hath triumphed gloriously."

## MUST THE CHURCH PASS THROUGH THE TRIBULATION?

**W**ILL the saints of the present age—during which the Spirit of God is gathering out of the nations a people to His name—pass through the great tribulation, or will they be previously caught up together to meet the Lord in the air?

If there is nothing more in this question than room for differences of opinion or a field for curious speculation, or an opportunity to call forth the inquisitive and investigating powers of the mind, it is not worthy of consideration. But it will be found, upon reflection, to affect the heart in relation to the whole subject of our Lord's second advent. The practical results of the conclusion to which it leads us, must, in the nature of the case, determine our posture with reference to the privilege of a constant waiting, and watching, and preparation for His coming. If we believe that He cannot come for many years, because certain predicted events must be fulfilled, the inevitable consequence will be, that His promised return can have no immediate bearing upon our personal conduct, as a daily hope and continual incentive to fidelity.

A serious difficulty lies in the way of accepting the view, that our Lord will not come for His saints until the restoration of the Jews to their own land, the development of the Antichrist, and the end of the unparalleled tribulation which will close the last days. It turns the thoughts from Himself to signs; from "the hope set upon us," to the unprofitable study of "times and seasons;" from the Bible to newspapers. Those who expect the Church to pass through the great tribulation, are of course deeply interested in the discussions of cabinets, and the secrets of council chambers, in the ambitious designs of emperors and presidents, in the movements of armies, in the settlement, and unsettlement of "The Eastern Question." But what shall a plain and a poor man do, who has neither leisure nor means to read anything but the Word of God?

That Word takes no note of time in connection with the Church, because the saints of the present dispensation are partakers of the *heavenly* calling, Heb. iii. 1; already quickened and raised up together with Christ, and made to "sit together in *heavenly* places in Christ Jesus," Eph. ii. 6. For our conversation (citizenship) is in *heaven*, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord

Jesus Christ, Phil. iii. 20. When the disciples said to the risen Jesus, "Lord, wilt Thou *at this time* restore again the *kingdom to Israel*?" He said to them, "It is not *for you* to know the times and the seasons." He obviously desired them to direct their attention wholly to Himself, as did the two men in white, who immediately afterwards exclaimed, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? *This same Jesus*, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven," Acts i. 6-11. No teaching can be safe, or scriptural, that diverts the mind from Him to anything whatever, and from "that blessed hope" to the necessity of delaying its fulfilment.—(*Extract.*)

ABRAHAM teaches us the right way of conversing with God: "*And Abraham fell on his face, and God talked with him!*" When we plead with Him, our faces should be in the dust. We shall not then speak lightly of Him, nor complain; nor will there be any more boasting. We shall abase ourselves, and exalt God. The Christian's secret intercourse with God will make itself manifest to the world. We may not see the husbandman cast the seed into the ground, yet when the corn grows and ripens, we know that it was sown. The mere professor, who may be found everywhere but in his secret chamber, may think that with care, he shall pass for a good Christian: but he mistakes, for the spirit will discover itself, of what sort it is. He who would walk safely and honourably, must walk closely with God in secret.

THE servant of God has not only natural sensibilities by which he feels, in common with other men, the sorrows of life, but he has moral sensibilities, which are peculiar to his character. When David was driven from his kingdom, he not only felt depressed as an exile and wanderer, but he would recollect his own sin as punished in the affliction. Eli had not only to suffer the pangs of a father in the loss of his sons, but he would recall, with bitterness of spirit, his own mismanagement in bringing up these sons. St. Paul had not only to endure the thorn in the flesh, but he would feel that he carried about him propensities to self-exaltation which rendered that thorn necessary and salutary.



## DAVID.

DAVID'S song, like all inspired songs, begins with Jehovah Himself. The particular benefits which moved the psalmist's grateful heart to praise, led him up to the Author of the deliverance and Giver of the gifts.

Thus sang Moses and the children of Israel on the borders of the wilderness, and Miriam led the women's response. So sang Hannah, the once barren and vexed wife, when she became a joyful mother. And thus also Mary uttered her grateful praises at the promise of the mysterious conception and honourable birth of Jesus.

Dear fellow-Christian! let us joy in God first, rather than in His gifts; so shall the gifts of His love ever lead us to Himself, the life of them all. "In God will I praise His Word," said David: so let us say, In the *Giver* will I *enjoy* His gifts. Verse first of 2 Sam. xxii. reveals the cause of David's song: "his deliverance by Jehovah from all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul." But in expressing his gratitude, the Spirit of Christ carried him beyond this, to utter that which could only be absolutely true of a greater than himself: David's son and David's Lord.

This song, brilliant with flashes of poetic fire, contains some expressions which, if regarded in connection with the singer, must be read in the light of his conduct towards Saul, rather than taken in the abstract, as describing the absolute nature of his general conduct in the sight of Jehovah. In verse 21 he says, "The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath He recompensed me." And in verse 25, "Therefore the Lord hath recompensed me; according to my righteousness, according to my cleanness in His eyesight." This was true as between David and his enemy Saul, but not as between David and Uriah or Bathsheba. David was rewarded by Jehovah for his righteousness, yea mercy, towards Saul; but he was saved and forgiven, upheld and restored, on the ground of free sovereign grace.

If we turn to David's Lord, we may then take the language as it stands, without a question, and examine its full meaning; we may analyze, judge, and apply them, without qualification; for all the present exaltation, dignity, and glory of the Risen Man, the Lord Jesus—together with the resurrection itself—

also all our blessedness, as in Him, from the morsel we eat, the forgiveness of sin, and eternal glory—all! all! is *grace* to us indeed, but to Him, the *just reward* of His perfect obedience to the death of the cross. "The *sure mercies* of David" are *just* and *holy* things.

Other expressions in this psalm denote its prophetic character, reaching on to the millennium, to the Solomon reign of Messiah, when He and His kingdom shall come, and be thus hailed, "Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord. See Psalms xlii., xli., xli.; and compare Isa. lv. 4, 5.

In chap. xxiii. we have David's last words; not, of course, his last utterances, but the last of his public prophetic words.

David is introduced, perhaps by the historian, as "the son of Jesse, the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob (from tending the flock to rule a nation), and as the sweet psalmist of Israel." This sweet singer says, "The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, and His word was in my tongue." And what was the subject of this communication? A perfect King and perfect rule. "The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me: He that ruleth over men *must be just*, ruling in the fear of God." Such a King and such rule he then aptly compares: "As the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth, by the clear shining after rain." Thus spake the Spirit of Christ in David; and as the promise of Solomon, as his son, was couched in language which referred to another King—a greater than Solomon was there; so must we say of this description—a greater than David is here. This David himself saw, for he adds immediately: "Although my house be *not so* with God, yet hath He made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation and all my desire, although He make it not to grow."

Thus far he sang of mercy and of grace; but even here judgment found a place: "But the sons of Belial *shall be* all of them as thorns *thrust away*, because they cannot *be taken* with hands. But the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron, and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place."

Let us dwell a while on this word of inspiration—this God-breathed, brief, but comprehensive prophecy.

"He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun ariseth." Yes! the return of the Messiah will bring Israel's night of ignorance, unbelief, and blasphemy to a close, and with it their sorrows and miseries. Unto the God-fearing remnant He, as "the Sun of Righteousness, shall arise with healing in His wings;" and that morning shall be without clouds—perpetual blessing. Nor will He fail to make Israel's future state answer to the next figure: "As tender grass springing out of the earth (before dry and barren), by the clear shining after rain;" for, "He who shall as the sun arise, will come down as rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth," Psalm lxxii. 6. After the scythe of judgment shall have swept over the field of Christendom, His descent shall be as of fertilizing showers—showers of blessing to Israel and the nations. Then, indeed, will that King and kingdom come to whom David referred, and of which he spake. All this, and much more, was embraced in the covenant, everlasting covenant, made with him by Jehovah, which was all his salvation and all his desire, albeit it grew not then. On that covenant he fell back, under consciousness that neither he as king nor his kingdom, answered to the Divine model.

Passing over the list of David's mighty men, noted for loyalty and valour, we come to a scene of which we are ready to say, would that it had been as happy and honourable as his last words were blessed! But it was not. Israel had sinned; the particular sin or sins are not named; but they had sinned; the anger of Jehovah was kindled against them, and the folly of their king was their correction as a nation.

Satan, who fell through pride, rose up against Israel, and tempted David in the pride of his heart to number Israel. 1 Chron. xxi. 1. And David said to Joab, "Go, number ye the people, that I may know the number thereof." To this commandment Joab replied, wisely indeed, could David but have discerned it: "Now Jehovah thy God add unto the people how many soever they be, an hundred-fold, and that the eyes of my lord may see it, but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?" Words of wisdom, but they fell not on an obedient ear. Pride had blinded the eye, perverted the judgment, and deadened the sensitive spirit. "The word of the king prevailed against Joab, and against the captains of the host, and they went out from the presence of the king to number the people."

Beloved, let us pause here for instruction and admonition.

The historical order of this event is instructive. It follows the enumeration of David's mighty men; they are named and numbered, and their deeds of valour respectively described. For a man, a king, to be surrounded by such, was sufficient to gratify that predominant principle of the heart, *pride*, and so pave the way for a more powerful temptation.

Let us watch! keep the heart with all diligence—the diligence of faith—that we may detect and "Abstain from all appearance, that is, the first appearance of the bud of evil," and cry, "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe."

Again, let us be admonished, warned against walking out of communion with God; for we see that David, out of communion with Him, and forgetful of His Word, could command that to be done which was abominable even to a wicked man, a man like Joab! Yes! a believer out of fellowship with God, and unsubject to His Word, can say and do things which shock and stumble the world.

In all this, an eye watched David, an ear listened to his words, and a hand weighed in true balances, with perfect weights, his conduct in numbering Jehovah's people, to please and plume himself. It displeased Jehovah, who is a jealous God; nor will He give His glory to another. Of this David was made sensible; his heart smote him, and he said unto Jehovah, "I have sinned greatly in that I have done; and now, I beseech Thee, O Jehovah, take away the iniquity of Thy servant; for I have done very foolishly." Here again we see that for which David was distinguished, the prompt unexcusing confession of sin, which always found in Jehovah a *readiness* to forgive. Nevertheless the sin must be dealt with, David must be disciplined. Psalm xcix. 8.

He was disciplined, and the nation converted from their sin. By the mouth of Gad, David's faithful seer, Jehovah bade him choose one out of three forms of correction: "Seven years' famine, three months' flight in battle, or three days' pestilence in the land." Three fearful scourges these! which might well place David in a great straight. But how wise was his decision: "Let us fall now into the hands of Jehovah; let us not fall into the hands of man."

Dear reader! have you never thanked God that it is with Himself you have first to do? If not, do so

from this time. Remember that if there are your brethren who upbraid you, a Saul who persecutes you, or a Shimei who curses you; yes, and if sickness or trial trouble you, it is with God, as in Christ, your Father in heaven, you have to do—to whom you should first appeal and pray. Make Him the rest of your souls, the fountain of your joys, and you will surely find Him all that your state and circumstances may require in days of trial and temptation; yes, and in the hour of chastisement no less! This will save you from quarrelling with circumstances, and fretting against creatures; you will pity these, and endure the other; finding God Himself all-sufficient.

H. H.

**BE YE NOT UNEQUALLY YOKED.**—If a believer marries an unbeliever, the miseries which ensue are endless. Were they determined, in kindness, to grant all they could to each other; yet they live as in two separate worlds. There is a great gulf between them, which cannot be passed without the grace of God; on which, while all should hope and pray for it, none should presume. They cannot taste the same pleasures, nor share the same sorrows, nor pursue the same objects, nor walk in the same path. What hope, then, can there be of comfort? Every Christian finds the corruptions of his own heart, the snares of the world, and the devices of Satan, together with innumerable secret anxieties, quite enough to struggle with in his journey to heaven, without adding another to his difficulties.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

**NOTE.**—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to “prove all things,” and “hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.

### QUESTION No. XX.

*How should believers be baptized? Is it in the Name of “the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,”—or in the Name of “the Lord Jesus” only?*

#### REPLY.

The form of words to be used when one is being baptized is no doubt what the writer seeks to arrive at, but is there not a deeper question underlying and closely connected with it? What authority have we for baptizing at all? Have we a command from the Lord Jesus in the Scripture, or have we simply the example of the Apostles? In connection with the Lord's Supper we have the words of the Lord Jesus Himself, 1 Cor. xi., “This do in remembrance of Me.” Have we not also for baptism? This would bring us at once to the two well known passages at the end of Matthew and Mark respectively: “Go ye, therefore, and teach (make disciples of) all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” Matt. xxviii. 19. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,” Mark xvi. 16.

Note the difference between the two passages, and how each is in accordance with the Gospel in which it occurs. In Matthew, where Christ is presented as “the Master of the House,” the command is to the workman, and responsibility is laid upon him to bap-

tize. In Mark, where He comes before us as the Servant, the exhortation is to the believer. In the Acts of the Apostles we find Peter on the day of Pentecost, as the workman, therefore saying, “be baptized;” whilst in Acts viii. the believer (the eunuch) says, “See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?”

It is not, therefore, a question of what words ought to be uttered by the baptizer—(*query*, Can it be shown from Scripture that each time a believer was baptized a certain formula was pronounced over him?)—but if he were asked, “Why did you do that?” what should he reply? “Apostles baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus?” or, “The Lord Jesus Christ authorizes me to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost?” Matt. xxviii. 19.

Now, what objections are made to this? 1st. That Matt. xxviii., in verses quoted, refers to a time when the Gospel will be preached to the Nations, as such, and not to this present time, when He is “taking out a people for His name,” Acts xv. 16. But note, the expression, “teach all nations” (*panta ta ethnē*) differs in no wise from Eph. iii. 16, “that the Gentiles (*ta ethnē*) should be fellow-heirs,” &c.; and yet no one imagines that that refers to a future day, or to the nations collectively, but only to those out of the

nations who believe, that is, Gentiles as distinct from Jews; so in Matt. xxviii. 19, the making of disciples was not to be limited to the Jewish circle, but was to be carried on in the wider one of the nations.

2nd. "All power is given unto Me." It is said that "all power" is not yet given, but will be at the commencement of the millennial kingdom; but the historical tense (aorist) is used, and we might render it "was given." Again, His power, whilst not now in exercise governmentally, is being exercised in *grace*, and all conversion work, &c., results from the exercise of that power.

3rd. It is said that wherever you get baptism mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, it is in the name of the Lord Jesus. But when we examine and bring together the different passages, we find each one slightly different from the other. "Be baptized every one of you in the name of *Jesus Christ*," Acts ii. 38. "They were baptized in the name of the *Lord Jesus*," viii. 16. "In the name of the *Lord*," x. 48. Again, three prepositions are used: *epi*, ii. 38; *eis*, viii. 16; *en*, x. 48. Do not these six differences help to show that none of them was, or is to be used as a formula? Is it not, that whilst in Matt. xxviii. 19 we get the authority from the Master for the servant to baptize, and in Mark xvi. 16 the responsibility thrown upon the believer to be baptized, these passages in the Acts bring out the CHARACTER of the baptism? not *John's* baptism; not *Moses*, not unto him as leader, as in the case of Israel; but *the Lord Jesus*, unto Him as Lord.

Though I have heard some say that Matt. xxviii. 19 did not apply to us *now*, I never heard any distinctly assert that the last verse did not: "Lo, I am with you always (all the days), unto the end of the age:" but surely all must be taken together—(1) Power is given, (2) go therefore, (3) make disciples, (4) baptizing them, (5) teaching them, (6) Lo, I am with you.

When Paul went to Ephesus, Acts xix. 1, and found certain disciples, he asked, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" Their reply was, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." Immediately Paul asked, "Unto what then were ye baptized?" "Unto John's baptism." Apollos, Acts xviii. 25, knew only the baptism of John, and could not bring these disciples beyond what he knew himself. But why did Paul ask them at once about baptism when they showed ignorance as to the Holy Ghost? Was it not this, If one had baptized

them as a servant of Christ, he would have instructed them that he acted not on his own authority, but in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of *the Holy Ghost*? And not only so, but in believing the Gospel concerning the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, with which faith baptism is associated, they would have received the Holy Spirit, and have been able to say in the spirit of sonship, "Abba, Father!" Compare Acts x. 44, with Gal. iii. 2, and iv. 6.

Believing these Scriptures to be very plain and conclusive, we should own Matt. xxviii. as our authority for baptizing, and would give that verse aloud when baptizing in the presence of any; that thus the act might be clearly connected with Scripture.

#### QUESTION NO. XXI.

*What is the duty of the Church toward one overtaken in the sin of drunkenness? If "put away," what is to be looked for in such before being received again into fellowship?*

#### REPLY.

The solemn act of "putting away" from the fellowship of the church, 1 Cor. v. 13, "cutting off," Gal. v. 12; or as it is commonly called, "excommunication," has a twofold purpose. 1st. It is in order to the restoration of the person so dealt with. See 1 Cor. v. 5; 2 Tim. i. 20. This being so, it is evident that if restoration be effected without the final act of separation, it is thereby rendered unnecessary. And not only so; to allow one who has been "put away," and to whom this punishment was made effectual in restoration, to remain outside the fellowship of the church, is to let Satan have an advantage. 2 Cor. ii. 8-11. Of course, the church having *unanimously* carried out the judgment of God in the act of separation, 1 Cor. v. 4, it is equally necessary that the receiving back again be unanimous and from the heart, and not a mere form covering up hidden suspicion. In this, as in all else concerning the order and discipline of the house of God, those that are "spiritual," Gal. vi. 1, and therefore "watching for souls," should take the lead. To put away a repentant child of God has no sanction whatever in Scripture; nevertheless such has been done, under the plea of clearing the assembly in the eyes of the world. But this principle is not in Scripture. If clear before God, and His will be carried out, to proceed further cannot be for His glory.

But to "put away from the Lord's table" a sinning

one, and at the same time to "company" with them, and have fellowship in a friendly way, is to frustrate all the purposes of discipline.

The second purpose of the act of separation is to conserve the holiness of the assembly. Whether the sin be in its nature moral or doctrinal, it is compared to "leaven," 1 Cor. v. 6; Gal. v. 9; and in reference to the apostate principles of the last days, a worse figure-still is used in 2 Tim. ii. 17, namely, "a canker," or "gangrene." Both figures teaching, that the inevitable result of retaining in the assembly, or being in company or fellowship with those guilty of such sins as are to be visited with excommunication, is to become contaminated thereby, and in danger of falling into the same. Instances of this having actually taken place are too numerous.

Before receiving back again one who has been put away, it must first be shown to the satisfaction of the assembly, that God has granted repentance. 2 Cor. xii. 21; 2 Tim. ii. 25; see also 2 Cor. ii. 7. This may involve waiting, and patiently watching the effect of the discipline, that the first dawning of true repentance may be welcomed and fostered. Sorrow and shame there may be, without that godly sorrow which worketh repentance. 2 Cor. vii. 10. Spiritual discernment is therefore necessary, that each case may be dealt with according to the mind of God. In matters of such delicacy and difficulty, no rules or regulations, not even those which God has laid down for us in His Word, can take the place of true-hearted dependence upon Him, and zeal for the honour of His name.

The reader is referred to another paper upon this subject in this Number, entitled, "Excommunication," by H. W. S.

#### QUESTION No. XXII.

*How can John iii. 13, "No man hath ascended up to heaven," be reconciled with 2 Kings ii. 11, "And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven?"*

#### REPLY.

In John iii. 13 the Lord is telling of heavenly things as a witness, who having come down from heaven and from the Father, was fully competent to speak of such things, and as a faithful witness claimed to be believed.

His words, therefore, which appear to present a difficulty, must be taken in their connection, from which it is perfectly evident that His meaning was, No man upon earth had ascended up into heaven, so

that he could come down and tell of heavenly things. Only the Son who came down from heaven could do this.

The fact that Enoch and Elijah had been taken up, is not touched upon, seeing they never returned as witnesses to tell of heavenly things.

#### QUESTION No. XXIII.

*How does John i. 18, "No man hath seen God at any time," agree with Exod. xxxiii. 11, "And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face?"*

#### REPLY.

That there are passages in the New Testament in which God is spoken of as never having been seen by man, and as being invisible to human sight, is unquestionable. See 1 Tim. vi. 16; Col. i. 15, &c. That there are also passages in the Old Testament which speak of Jehovah as having been seen, is equally certain. The explanation is, that whether it be in the Old Testament or the New that the Lord is said to have been seen, it could only have been in the person of the Son. One instance of this may suffice: Comp. Isa. vi. 1, with John xii. 41, from which passages it appears that the person whom Isaiah saw amid such majesty in the temple, was none else than Jesus of the New Testament.

Although He was God, and was with God, and was not manifested until He became incarnate, still it seems unquestionable, that on certain occasions He assumed the form and appearance of humanity, and was seen by, and communed with, His people. See Gen. xviii.; xxxii.; Judges xiii. 18-22.

#### NOTICES.

**BALDOCK.**—Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ meet in His name for the Breaking of Bread, on the first day of the week, in obedience to His Word, at the Iron Room, Orchard Road, Baldock, Hertfordshire.

**KILMARNOCK.**—The Christians gathering to the Name of the Lord, formerly in Temperance Hall, Kilmarnock, have now removed to the Evangelistic Hall, 8 Duke Street. Meeting for "Breaking of Bread" on Lord's-days at 11 A.M.

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# THE NORTHERN WITNESS

LONDON

JAMES E. HAWKINS,  
19 Paternoster Sq., E.C.,  
and 36 Baker Street, W.

AUGUST,  
1880.

GLASGOW

GEO. TURNER & Co.,  
40 Sauchiehall Street.

## THE PRACTICAL PERVERSION OF TRUTH.

**I**N this our day, we hear men openly and without fear, denying the truth of God, sneering at it, and calling it a fable. Well, one has little difficulty in understanding what that means; and every one who loves, and desires to honour God, knows how to treat it. There are others, however, who, while they profess to believe, honour, and reverence the Holy Scriptures, so "pervert" it, as to change and turn its meaning into something other than God intended. There were such in the apostle Paul's day. In Galatians i. 6, 7, the apostle speaks of some who sought to pervert the Gospel. By this we are not to understand that they denied or rejected the gospel, though in a very solemn sense they did this too, but they perverted it. That is, they held a gospel which was not *the* Gospel. It was Christ and something besides. The Lord Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." These perverters, spoken of in Galatians, said, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." Acts xv. 1. Thus they made the Gospel of none effect. Alas! many such perverters are to be found in these days, who preach another gospel, or rather the true Gospel perverted, or turned and distorted to suit the popular taste.

Our purpose, however, is not to speak of perversion in the above sense; we mean to come nearer home—to press the matter close to our own souls, for there is a perversion of truth among the children of God which is really sad and vexing. We do not mean that any

of us would for a moment, in the sense referred to, seek to pervert or change any of the truth of God. I doubt not we would tremble at the thought of doing so. But let us put the question to our hearts, and let us answer in all sincerity and honesty before our God: "Am I not *practically* perverting much of the truth of God?" Are you? You will easily know whether you are or not.

We would suggest a few things for your consideration, that, by the blessing of God, you may be the more able to give an answer which shall be well-pleasing to God, and one that shall be for your joy and profit now and in the day of Christ.

Suppose we begin with CONVERSION. What do we mean when we speak of our conversion? "Oh," you say, "it means our salvation, or being saved. Our being *turned from the error of our ways*, and led to Christ, and by Him saved from the penal consequences of our sins in hell for ever." Perhaps every saved person would not answer in precisely the same words, still, in substance, it would come to the same thing. What do you think of this definition of conversion?—"The word conversion means a turning. Applied to us when we believe: it means a turning from our own thoughts of ourselves and God; a coming to Christ, and by faith accepting Him as our Saviour from hell, and from our old ways and practices—including, among other things, the hasty temper, and unadvised word; the greed and grasping after money, social position and influence, and many other things equally important—which we thoroughly believed in, and sought after when we were newly converted." Or, what would you think of this definition of conversion? "Now

that I am saved, I can never be lost, and it is really not to be expected that I can be tied down to the bare Word of God; and I may occasionally lose my temper and speak a hasty word, even though I should not be much annoyed about it; and I'm quite right to lay up as much as I can, and spend as much as I like upon myself and family, it may be a pound or thirty shillings, and only give a penny or a threepenny piece to the Lord."

The above is a practical definition of conversion in the case of too many, three, five, seven, or ten years *after* conversion. Ah, you may hold the whole theory of conversion most scripturally, and yet practically pervert it. Conversion is not a turning for a year or two from the error of your ways, and, while still holding the theory, yet going back to your old ways. Brother or sister, how is it with you? Are you to-day what you once were? This you ought not to be; for surely you ought to be more like Christ now than then. Do allow the candle of the Lord to search you; and by its unerring and searching light, make sure whether or not you are practically a perverter of the blessed truth of conversion to God.

Let us look for a moment at another blessed truth—**BAPTISM**. Some who read this may look back to a time when a severe struggle went on in their soul whether they should obey the Word of the Lord in this matter or not. But, so real was their "conversion" to God then, that, like the Thessalonians, they had *turned to God, to serve the living and true God*; and they gladly obeyed the Word. Then, it was no meaningless thing. Then, to their souls it sweetly spoke of their identification with Christ: how they were cut off from their former fellowship and pursuits, and were in fellowship with the rejected One, dead, buried, and risen with Him. No doubt you will say, "These are exactly my views of baptism." All right, so far, dear brother. Perhaps you are able publicly to speak on the subject, and show much that is meant by it; but, is it not a wholesome question for your soul and mine to ask: Am I *living* the truths signified by baptism, or am I practically perverting them? How sad must the spiritual condition of the believer be, when practically his baptism becomes "*unbaptism*." This was so with the Jew in regard to circumcision. His circumcision became uncircumcision through his failure to practically carry out the thing taught in circumcision, See Rom. ii. 25-29. Into what a strange

condition must the brother have fallen who practically ignores the things taught in baptism, and yet glories in having been baptized. Can it be that any who read this paper are practically perverting—representing in a false light by their words and ways—the solemn truth they boldly professed when they were buried in baptism? To what good can it tend to preach or talk about being dead and risen with Christ; dead to the world, and alive unto God, when, after all, there is not so much difference between him who believes it, or at least knows it in theory, and him who knows it not? It can tend to no good whatever; but it will have the sure effect of proving injurious to the soul of him who thus holds it; and it will also, sad to say, cause the name and doctrine of God to be blasphemed.

One thing more: **THE BREAKING OF BREAD**. As a rule, believers will be at the breaking of bread, even if they are not seen at a teaching, gospel, or prayer meeting all the rest of the week. It is in connection with our gathering together to break bread that it is said we are to judge ourselves, lest we be judged. From the worship meeting all other meetings should take their tone. But do they? And from our fellowship on the first day of the week, in remembering the Lord's death, all our actions during the week should take their character. "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." 2 Cor. iv. 10. Generally speaking, saints gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus understand what is meant and taught by the breaking of bread. But, as in the things already referred to, a clear conception of the breaking of bread, and a determination to contend for it may be possessed, while, in great part, the thing itself is practically denied. Could anything more touchingly bring before our souls the wondrous love, and intense suffering of the blessed Lord Jesus on Calvary, than that broken bread and poured-out wine? And why do *we* break the bread and drink the wine? Oh, wondrous truth! Though it was our sins led Him thus to suffer and die, yet, through that atoning death, we are reconciled to God, and are made one with Christ as risen from the dead. Thus, the bread and wine tell us not only of His suffering for us, but of our union with Him, and with each other. All this I may believe and teach; but, do I—do you—by my everyday life show that it is a union with Christ I enjoy and feel the power of? By my behaviour towards fellow-saints, do I show



that our union with each other is more than a mere sitting in the same room, and partaking at the same table? It must surely be ill-pleasing to the Lord to see those, professedly His children, eating of the same loaf and drinking of the same cup, worshipping and praising the same Lord; and yet, when some little occasion is given, saying all manner of evil about each other. It is positively appalling how some—both brothers and sisters—when they meet, can gossip and talk about absent ones, seemingly forgetting the Lord both sees and hears. Let us not forget that we are one with every saint who loves His name, whether they see with us or not; and let us beware of any tendency to narrowness of heart. We do not mean to teach *that* kind of love which lightly esteems the truth of God; but we mean to teach *that* zeal and fleshy pride is of the devil, which would lead us so to contend for truth, whilst despising even the weakest of God's saints. We must confess it is with much misgiving we hear the phrase, now so common, "Out in separation." Not that we find any fault with the phrase in itself; but, when the lives of those who use it are not what they ought to be, it suggests to one's mind the painful fact, that merely being "out in separation" gives no power in itself. Indeed, unless there is thorough practical consecration of spirit, soul, and body to the Lord, we shall find that to be "out in separation" is above all others the place where we shall be most liable to be tempted into a kind of spiritual conceit and affected piety, which will indeed make us perverters of the blessed truths, of which our lives ought to be a "living epistle."

M. K.

PERHAPS it is a greater energy of Divine power which keeps the Christian from day to day, from year to year, praying, hoping, running, believing, against all hindrances—which maintains him as a living martyr—than that which bears him up for an hour in sacrificing himself at the stake.

MEDITATION on the Word of God is the chief means of our growth in grace. Without this, even prayer itself will be little better than an empty form. Meditation nourishes faith, and faith and prayer are the keys which unlock the hidden treasures of the Word.  
—P. C. C.

God denies a Christian nothing, but with a design to give him something better.

## THOUGHTS CONCERNING FELLOWSHIP.

By J. R. C. (Continued.)

19. **W**HAT the many sects of Christendom differ widely as to the extent in which the authority of Christ and His Word is set aside cannot be questioned. Perhaps none of the Protestant sects can be compared in the depths of its apostacy with the Romish Church—with its Papal Infallibility, and innumerable other abominations. And it is well to keep this in view, making a difference. Besides, amongst some denominations there is a large proportion of the true children of God, whilst in others, *e.g.*, Unitarians, it is hardly conceivable that a child of God could be found. But the essence of apostacy consists in the setting aside of Christ's authority over His own house and substituting the will of man;—the rejection of His Word as the only appeal and setting up instead thereof the doctrines and commandments of men. Where such is the case, no course is open to those who desire to walk in fellowship with the Father and the Son, and with one another, but separation. Corinth had not reached that point, hence separation there is not proposed.

20. But in 2 Timothy a darker scene is foretold. Christendom is likened to "a great house," in which are many vessels—some to honour, some to dishonour. False teachers are propounding false doctrines, and their word would "eat as a gangrene;" therefore the servant of the Lord, in order that he might be a vessel unto honour sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, is exhorted to "*purge out*" himself from these. The line once so broad and clear between the Church and the world is no longer discernable, for the world has adopted the form of godliness to cover its iniquity, and the believers have descended to its level and mixed themselves with the people. Hence the exhortation appropriate to such a changed condition of things, "The Lord knoweth them that are His," as though it had ceased to be possible for man to discern amid the confusion between tares and wheat; and then the definite course for the believer amid surrounding apostacy, "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ\* depart from iniquity."

\* Here, according to the best authorities, it is "the name of the Lord."

21. This departure from iniquity, and naming the name of the Lord, answers to the Lord's own commendation of the Philadelphian Church, "Thou has kept *My word*, and hast not denied *My name*," and must of necessity result in a gathering unto His name, according to Matt. xviii. 20, which implies the recognition of Christ's authority as Lord in the midst of His gathered ones, and consequently of His word as the only rule and final appeal.

22. Amongst such there may be room for many diversities of judgment on many points; for much ignorance and weakness, for slowness to apprehend the mind of the Lord, through prejudices and the influence of early training; but there ought not to be room for the self-will that refuses to appeal to Scripture, and would set aside the authority of Christ. This would be to bring in again the principles that have developed into the apostate condition of surrounding Christendom.

23. When "all that believed were together" (Acts ii. 44), "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (ver. 42). Those who have surrendered the doctrines and commandments of men for the word of Christ, are necessarily thrown back upon the original principles of the Church, and therefore are responsible to continue in these four divine appointments.

24. As to "the apostles' doctrine," continuance in this is enforced in many subsequent Scriptures, God having foreseen the energy and subtlety with which Satan, mainly through the instrumentality of false teachers, would seek to turn the saints away from the same (see 2 Peter iii. 2; Jude 3; 2 Thess. iii. 6; 1 Thess. iv. 1, 2; 1 Cor. xiv. 37). This is the foundation of "the fellowship" that follows.

25. As to the fellowship, it was then a definite circle comprising all believers; but when the responsibilities that attach to it are considered, it will be seen that definiteness is still essential, though in times of apostacy it is composed, not of all believers, but of those who are seeking in simplicity unto "God and the Word of His grace" (Acts xx. 32).

26. In the Acts of the Apostles such expressions occur as (in xi. 24), "much people was added to the Lord;" (v. 14), "believers were the more added to the Lord." In ii. 47, "added together" (this being, without question, the true reading, not "added to the church"); and again, simply "added," as in ii. 41. It will be well to weigh carefully these expressions.

They show that those who believe are looked at—first, as being "added to the Lord," because He is the centre—the one bond of unity; secondly, as "added together," the direct consequence of a common drawing to the one centre; and thirdly, as added to those already so drawn together. Note specially that believers are said to be added to **THE LORD** for the owning of His Lordship forms the essential condition for the maintenance of fellowship.

27. Whilst being added to the Lord involves no act on the part of any but the Lord Himself, the adding in actual fellowship to those that call on His name involves a "joining" on the one hand and a "receiving" on the other. Compare Acts v. 13 and ix. 26–28, also Romans xiv. 1 and xv. 7. But the joining and receiving in all cases are but the practical working-out of the "adding to the Lord" already referred to.

28. Whilst the reception into fellowship of an assembly ought to be the hearty act of the whole and of each one individually, no form of reception is prescribed in Scripture. Some have adopted what is called "the right hand of fellowship;" but, first, this action is not found in Scripture in connection with reception into the assembly, but with going forth from the assembly on special evangelistic work; and secondly, it was not the European custom of greeting by shaking of hands, but the laying hands on the head, indicating identification or hearty consent to, and fellowship in, the service of those so designated. Nevertheless, in view of the repeated warnings concerning the creeping in of the ungodly from corrupt motives, those who "watch for souls as those who must give account," in other words, those who have oversight, or give themselves to shepherding the flock, will diligently watch against the introduction of those who would cause the simple to err from the truth. See Acts xx. 29; Jude 4.

29. No practical difficulty is felt, as a rule, with respect to those newly converted. Unless immediately laid hold of by sectarian workers, and prejudiced against the truth, they usually are ready to drink in the Word, and to follow, as they see it, what they find in Scripture to be the will of the Lord. Such are truly disciples or learners, and as such their place is within the assembly of those gathered to the Lord, whenever the assembly has been satisfied that they have truly passed from death unto life. This, where godly care is exercised, may occupy some time—it may be weeks. For an *individual* to take the

responsibility in such a manner out of the hands of those who care for the flock, and anticipate their judgment by bringing such an one to the Lord's Table at once, thus allowing them to break bread first and afterwards to be received by the Church, is most unscriptural, and liable to lead to serious abuses. The delay of a week or two is not a "refusal" to receive such, neither is it a "*barrier put in their way,*" and ought not to be so regarded when godly care and order render it necessary.

30. Neither is difficulty felt generally concerning cases which could be termed heretical. That is to say, the case of persons who had let go fundamental doctrines of Scripture, such as atonement by substitution, or everlasting punishment. Scripture warrants the rejection of such, and even their expulsion if already within (Gal. i. 7, 8; v. 9, 10; Titus iii. 10; Rom. xvi. 17, 18).

31. The practical difficulty which exercises at present the minds of very many of the children of God\* concerns those who are Christians, but who are members of various more or less orthodox sectarian communities. To hold that such cannot be received until they have judged as evil, root and branch, the religious denomination in which they have been brought up, in which, it may be, they have been converted and otherwise blessed, is to make knowledge the basis of fellowship, and such knowledge as it has taken many who are now clear as to the evil of sectarian position, very many years to attain. The great majority of those who have separated from denominations, have done so at first upon some special point to which their eyes were opened. Very commonly it is the admission of the unsaved to the communion; in some cases it is infant baptism; in others it is the clerical position; and finding no way to rectify such evils—any effort to do so only proving that they are part and parcel of the whole system—they have been compelled to take the path of separation, and "departing from iniquity" have found themselves drawn to the company of those who were at least *seeking* to "call on the Lord out of

a pure heart" (2 Tim. ii. 22). But hardly ever does any one at first perceive the extent of the evil. On the contrary, it is often long afterwards before the truth has so penetrated their minds that they finally judge according to God how contrary to Scripture are the principles of the sect from which they withdrew.

32. Still worse would it be to exact a pledge, such as that they should not be found returning to the denomination to which they had been attached. This would result in bringing the soul into bondage to the authority of men, and, instead of helping, would only hinder "the obedience of faith," which never can go beyond the measure of the enlightenment given by the Spirit of God. But where there is a willingness to own the authority of the Lord Jesus, and to let the Word of the Lord be appealed to as final, the way is surely clear to receive such, however uninstructed in the faith.

33. But, in view of the rapidly developing evils both in doctrine and practice of Christianity, there is an ever increasing need for watchfulness and discernment, together with faithfulness, in dealing with all who would join themselves unto those who are gathered to the name of the Lord. Many a professed "young convert" is hastily brought in, perhaps by an individual to whom he is personally known, without opportunity for the exercise of that discernment and care on the part of those having oversight, which is essential to the well-being of an assembly. The result is soon manifest in a careless life, a proud unbroken spirit, and probably, ere long, a slipping away, or a falling into open sin. Of course, even where the greatest care is exercised this may take place, but as a rule it is through hasty reception, or indifference on the part of those who should be "watching" as those that must give account.

34. The receiving of a believer into the fellowship of an assembly, whether it be one newly converted, or one from a sect, is no trivial matter; for, first, it affects the whole assembly, and therefore ought not to be the act of an individual; secondly, it is not an act that can be done to-day and cancelled in a week. Once received into the fellowship, there is no power to separate such an one until such sin has been committed as warrants their being put away upon Scriptural grounds. Thirdly, it carries with it not merely the privilege of "breaking bread," but all the other privileges connected with "the coming in and going

\* The number and variety of questions received by the Editor from all parts of Britain, and from abroad, upon this subject, is sufficient indication of the wide-spread desire for instruction in such matters. These questions being too numerous and varied to reply to in an ordinary question page, we have been led to embody, as far as possible, in these "Thoughts concerning Fellowship," such truths as may help to a solution of the difficulties of most of the questions.—*Ed.*

out" (Acts ix. 28) among the believers. If this were understood, brethren would no longer take upon themselves the responsibility, as individuals, of bringing in others to the breaking of bread; on the contrary, they would gladly seek the help of those who care for the flock, so that each believer might be introduced in a godly and scriptural way, and at once be received with confidence by the whole assembly. When Barnabas introduced Saul to the Church at Jerusalem, he first "brought him to the apostles." Having satisfied them that he was indeed a disciple, the brethren had confidence to receive him heartily (Acts ix. 26-28).

35. Were all the Christians in any given locality or town to separate from the unsaved, and meet together "simply as Christians," each one still holding his unscriptural opinions, some contending for a salaried clergyman, others for infant baptism, others for the observance of the Lord's Supper once in six months, no acknowledgement of the supreme authority of the Word of the Lord, no readiness to own Christ as Lord in the midst of His gathered saints, but instead thereof man's opinions and man's will—how could a true-hearted believer possibly carry out the will of the Lord in such an assembly? Might he not have to separate from such, even if they were all Christians, in order to be where the will of the Lord could be carried out? What a hindrance then must arise in an assembly composed even partially of those who have never been exercised about the order of the house of God, and the place of authority within that is due to Christ as Lord?

36. Within the fellowship of the assembly there is what might be called a special fellowship in service. This is illustrated in the case of Paul, who chose Silas rather than Mark (Acts xv. 37-40) to be his co-labourer in the Gospel. Paul was justified in choosing one fellow-labourer and refusing another whom he deemed unfit, while both alike were recognised as in the fellowship of the assembly. Again, in Phil. ii. 19-21, the apostle refers to Timothy as one with whom he had fellowship in service when none else was like-minded. And specially in the work of oversight, caring for the flock, there is special fellowship, and in Scripture the elders or overseers are continually found acting together, and not merely as individuals apart from each other.

THE love of sin makes sin taste sweet, and this sweetness beguiles the heart and ruins the soul.

"Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones; and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place where ye shall lodge this night."—Joshua iv. 3.

"A LODGING PLACE" for this short night,  
Such is this world to me;  
I've passed through death, and now I wait  
The morning light to see.

The land with honey from the rock,  
And oil of joy replete,  
Is mine; in every fragrant spot,  
On which I place my feet.

There is no limit, He who gives  
Has passed this way before,  
And in the riches of His grace,  
Unveils its boundless store.

By His own Spirit in my soul  
He'll guide me on the road,  
And soon will open to my view  
My final rest with God.

M. W.

"JOSEPH was brought down to Egypt." "Abram went down into Egypt."—A picture of two servants of the Lord filling the same place. One is "brought" into that position by God; "the word of the Lord tried him;" but he is saved from sin through fierce temptation, and is made a blessing, for "the Lord was with him." The other "went" into it of his own accord; therefore he falls into sin when tried, and has to be "sent away" by those who were "plagued" for his sake. (Genesis xii. and xxxix.)

God's way of answering the Christian's prayer for an increase of patience, experience, hope and love, usually is to put him into the furnace of tribulation. St. James therefore says, *Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.* People of the world count it all joy when they are in ease and affluence; but a Christian is taught to count it all joy when he is tried as gold in the fire.

#### ERRATUM IN JULY NUMBER.

Article entitled "Notes on Numbers vii.," &c.—The meaning of this article is greatly obscured by an error which occurs in the third and fourth lines of the second paragraph. Read instead of, "according to the riches of the Offering foreshadowed," &c., "according as the riches of the offering foreshadowed the One Sacrifice," &c.

## THE WOMAN COVERED.

1 COR. XI. 3-16.

**C**OVERING is the proper sign of woman. It expresses the *subjection she owes*. But the woman is mystically the Church; and thus, if a woman appear in the congregation covered, she appears duly, with the sign of subjection to Christ or the man, Eph. v. 24. But it expresses also *the protection she receives*. And thus, if she do not appear covered, *she publishes her own shame*, for she does not carry the token of her proper state, but appears rather as a captive, or as a suspected woman. See Num. v., Deut. xxi. She ought, therefore on these two accounts in the congregation to appear covered. But there is another reason why this should be. She should be covered "because of the angels," for angels are learning lessons from and through the Church, Eph. iii. 10, and the uncovered head of the woman would teach them a wrong lesson. But the man is *not* to be covered in the congregation, because, mystically, the man is Christ, and the image and glory of God, and it belongs not to Christ to bear the signs of either *subjection owed or of protection claimed*—quite different from the woman who is mystically, as I said, only the Church, "the glory of the man." Christ is Lord and Saviour of the body, Eph. v. 23, *i. e.*, *claims my subjection, and rendering protection, instead of owing subjection and claiming protection*. If the man therefore were covered, he would sadly dishonour his head—Christ.

As to verse 5 of this chapter, I judge that the apostle means simply *the place* where praying or prophesying is going on, as in the church or assembly of the saints. I do not think that his language implies that the women were *themselves* either to pray or to teach, because in verse 4 the very same words are used as to the man, and we are sure that all the men are equally to be uncovered in the place of prayer, though *most of them may never engage actively in it*. And so also those men who do at times in the assembly either teach or pray, yet when merely sitting silent in their places, are to be as much uncovered as when they are actually ministering. So that I judge the apostle speaks of the *place* of prayer and teaching, or of the *condition of the assembly*. He legislates, without assuming, that women necessarily are either to teach or to pray. In 1 Tim. ii., on the other hand, it is not the mere condition of things in the place of prayer, or the *mere appearance of the male and female*, the apostle has in hand, but the *actual services* of the assembly, and there he expressly requires the silence of the woman.

J. G. B.

THE CAUSES AND COURSE OF  
PETER'S FALL.

By J. M.

"Did I not see thee in the garden with Him?" (John xviii. 26).

**W**HILE very weak, cold, and fainting through loss of spiritual strength, from six previous wounds, Peter had the above sharp accusation put to him in the form of a question, by the kinsman of Malchus, the servant of the high priest, and, like the flash of the foeman's steel, it was aimed as a deadly thrust, from Satan, at Peter's heart.

In these trying circumstances, this weakly condition, he reeled and staggered under it, as one in the delirium of death; for, instead of meeting it manfully as a *good soldier of Jesus Christ*—having already forsaken the ranks, thrown away his armour, and gone over to the enemy's side—he met it with a blank denial of his Lord, coupled with oaths and curses.

And thus he received a seventh, last, terrible heart-scar.

Among the first followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, Peter was one of three highly favoured disciples who witnessed the most confidential scenes of our Lord's life. An eyewitness to every miracle, he was also present on the mount of transfiguration, and saw there the Kingdom of God come with power, Mark ix. 1, and scarcely a word which fell from those lips into which grace was stored, during almost the whole of His public ministry, but had fallen on Peter's ear, and many of them, in measure at least, into Peter's heart; for at one time he could say—seemingly with the utmost confidence—"Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." John vi. 68, 69.

His heart did not always keep pace with his head, however; for while he was well up in doctrine, he was, as yet, lacking in that personal experience of heart-searching and self-judging before God, which every believer must have in order to stand trial.

He seemed to know the Christ of God, while in many respects he was ignorant of himself. As yet, he knew not the deceitfulness of the desperately wicked human heart—the impetuosity of his own nature—that impulsiveness of spirit which often caused him to blunder, and ultimately fall. Therefore, although he had great knowledge of Christ, as being "the Son of the living God," he was but weak in the faith, and in "the grace which is in Christ Jesus"—that rich,

abounding, converting grace, by which alone we are enabled to hold self in, to subdue every unevenness of temper, unhallowed feeling, and unholy desire.

Dear young Christian reader! seek to grow in grace, as well as in knowledge, and ever dread that state of soul which too often tends to backsliding—first of heart, and then of life—not so much a want of knowledge, as a lack of prayerful dependence upon God.

Knowledge belongs to the head, but grace lives only in the heart; knowledge puffeth up, but grace humbles; by all means get knowledge, but by all means also “grow in grace.” Seek ever to cultivate that grace which lays, and keeps us low, at His feet, for it is only—as Bunyan, a believer of long and varied experience, has said—

“He that is down need fear no fall,  
He that is low, no pride;  
He that is humble, ever shall  
Have God to be his guide.”

Few Christians have fallen just at once; for there are, we believe, degrees in backsliding, just as there are degrees of growth in grace; and in turning our attention to the seven steps, or degrees, in Peter’s sinful, downward course, may God help us to profit from his sad experience.

1st.—His self-confidence and presumption. In his avowed allegiance and fealty to Christ, he solemnly affirmed, that although all should be offended in Him, yet he would not, Matt. xxvi. 33; and, Mark xiv. 29, he also said, “Lord, I am ready to go with Thee into prison and to death.” Luke xxii. 33. But where was all this boasted bravery when the hour of trial came?

Too often, alas! those who seem the boldest when no danger is near, are the most cowardly and faint-hearted when faith, fortitude, and true Christian manliness are most needed. Those who are ever ready, by beautiful and fair speeches, to avow themselves the friends of a common cause, when nothing is required at their hands, are often the least friendly when their friendship and help is sought. But those of quite a different temperament, who would rather hang back at the beginning—like Moses, Gideon, and Jeremiah, see Exod. iii. 11-14, and iv. 1, 10-14; Judges vi. 12-23, 36-40; Jer. i. 6-8—are often the sort of people to be counted upon in the end. But Peter broke his promises and vows in the dark hour of his Lord’s extremity.

2nd.—Peter fell asleep while Jesus was in an agony of prayer. He asked the three to watch with Him, but they were soon asleep. Then He commanded them

to watch and pray, lest they should enter into (*i.e.* yield to) temptation; and Peter was the only one whom, previously, the Lord reprov’d for thus yielding. See Matt. xxvi. 37-41; Mark xiv. 37. How soon their watching gave place to drowsiness, and their praying to sleeping!

Neglecting to watch, how soon we forget to pray; and forgetting prayer, how soon we neglect the Word of God, and memory fails therein; then Satan gains an easy advantage over us. This is where so many Christians, specially the young and inexperienced, get into the rapids of the downward course.

Dear young believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, in every circumstance of life remember His own command: “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.”

3rd.—He gave place to wrath, drew a sword, and cut off Malchus’ right ear. John xviii. 10.

Had he not given way to sleep, but continued steadfastly in prayer along with the Lord Jesus in the hour of His terrible agony, he would have been thereby fully prepared to meet those enemies—armed although they were with swords and staves—without the least ruffle of temper, and without having recourse to any carnal weapon whatever. Moreover, had fighting with the sword been really what was required of him, prayer would have manned him for that purpose; and instead of that aimless-like stroke, which was more like the naughty doing of a cross, irritable, half-slept child, than the deed of a soldier, he could have cut off a head with far greater ease, than he cut off an ear. But Christ’s Kingdom was not, is not, of this world; and, therefore, His servants have no need, neither have they any authority, to fight, either with sword, or staff, with fist, or foot, or tongue; and the same angry passions may burn as much in the bosom of that Christian who fights with the latter, as in the bosom of one who fights with any, or all of the former.

Possibly Peter was present on that occasion when James and John, his companions, asked permission from Jesus to command fire to come down from heaven and consume the inhabitants of a certain Samaritan village, who refused to receive Him, “because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem. But He turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.” Luke ix. 49-56. But if he did not hear those

gracious words, he undoubtedly heard others to the same purport while listening to what is usually termed "The Sermon on the Mount," *viz.*: "Ye have heard how it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them who despitefully use you, and persecute you: that ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven." Matt. v. 43-45. And no sooner had Peter made a breach upon this law of love, in the garden, than Christ healed it; and by His rebuke to Peter, and the miracle He performed on Malchus, those who are inclined to clamour for Christians using "self defence," ought to be for ever silenced.

The Saviour—not the sword—defended Peter, and those with Him on that occasion, from being cut to pieces by an armed rabble mob. "The Good Shepherd" was afterwards smitten, the sheep were scattered, but none of them was lost, John xvii. 12, and "the Great Shepherd," great "through the blood of the everlasting covenant," now lives to lead, feed, govern, and defend every sheep of His fold that truly follows Him. Each of them "may say, and that truly," "My defence is of God, who saveth the upright in heart. Because of His strength will I wait upon Thee; for God is my defence. Unto Thee, O my strength, will I sing; for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy. He only is my rock, and my salvation: I shall not be moved." Psalm vii. 10; lix. 9, 17; and lxxii. 6. Christ having rebuked Peter for using the sword, with a command to "put it up into his place"—also added this timely warning, "All they who take the sword shall perish with the sword." It ought never, therefore, to have been taken and used again, by any one professing to be a follower of the lowly "Lamb of God."

It may be quite legitimate for those Christians who were enlisted in the army previous to conversion, to abide in their calling until they can be made free. But we marvel that any young man should ever think of becoming a soldier—or even a "volunteer"—after enlisting under the blood-stained banner of the cross of Christ; for that must be going right in the face of 2 Cor. vi. 14, just as much as when a Christian marries a person who is unsaved; or when a saved person goes into partnership with one or more persons who are unconverted; or when believers mix themselves up with unbelievers, in what are termed "harmless amusements, bodily recreations, social enjoyments, and religious associations."

Young believers, both in the army and navy, who have been converted since they entered "Her Majesty's Service," often wish themselves free, in order, as they say, "to have better opportunities for getting, and for doing, good;" while some of our Christian young men at home, specially when trade is dull, and work and situations not easily found, may think that if they were in the army or navy they would be spared a great deal of anxiety, as far as food and raiment, at least, are concerned and would have ample time for the study of the Word, as well as fine opportunities for living a very exemplary life, and doing much for the Lord amongst their companions. Moreover, they may even consult the opinions, and ask the advice of other Christians as to whether it would be right or wrong for them to become soldiers; when some will advise one way, and some another. Well, we are not left to be guided by what this or the other good person may think or say; but simply by, "What saith the Scripture?" and let it, and it alone, instruct and guide in this, as well as in every other circumstance in life. "Thus it is written"—"Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he is called. Art thou called, being a servant? care not for it; but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman; likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men." "Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God." 1 Cor. vii. 20-24.

This is so plain and simple it requires no comment; but a word here may prove a help to some. "Art thou called being a servant (literally rendered, slave), care not for it;" *i.e.*, do not perplex yourself or be discouraged at that; or, do not let that be a hindrance, in any way to your service in the Lord; "but, if thou mayest be free," *i.e.*, lawfully bought off, or let away—whether as a slave or a soldier; for there is very little difference to us—"use it rather," *i.e.*, freedom or liberty, in preference to remaining in bondage. "For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant (or, slave), is the Lord's freeman; likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant (or, slave)." Therefore, in either case, whether bond or free, being His—both by right of purchase and possession—we, who are free, have no right to become soldiers or slaves; and those who are bound, ought—in a lawful way—to be set at liberty.

For, "Ye are bought with a price, be not ye the servants of men."

But how many of God's children are the slaves of men in a different sense? They are bound by the chains of their own slavish fears and false shame, and have no power to sever themselves from various questionable connections, known by them to be such, both in the "Churches," so called—and in other religious associations—as well as in their worldly callings. "Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide *with God*." Mark that, "with God"; and if "ye"—converted people—be in any calling or association whatever, wherein "ye" cannot "abide with God," or God with you, then the sooner "ye" are out of it the better.

We have already noticed that Christ first rebuked Peter's sin (in the garden), and then healed its wound in Malchus: rebuked the sin of a professed friend, and healed the wound of an open enemy. O, how condescendingly gracious was every action of the Lord Jesus Christ! and how truly blessed ever to remember that "Jesus Christ—the same, yesterday, and to-day, and for ever"—is still acting in grace toward erring ones. As He acted toward these two in the garden, so He acts towards those whom He saves. In the case of conversion, there is usually, first, the loving rebuke; and then, the touch of power; and the sinner is restored—immediately he is made whole. Some, it is true, hear the rebuke a while before they experience the touch of power; and in other cases they are almost simultaneous. As, for example, in the case of the woman at the well. "Thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband"—the rebuke of love; and "I that speak unto thee am He"—Christ the Messiah—the touch of power, *Jno. iv. 18-26*; and immediately she went into the glorious work of inviting others to Christ.

But in the case of Saul of Tarsus, it was a little different. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?"—the loving rebuke; but it was three days (which were three days of darkness) before he experienced the touch of power, through Ananias, of Straight Street, Damascus, "putting his hands on him, saying, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, . . . hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost; and immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized. *Acts ix. 1-18*."

Christ's loving rebuke ought, at once, to have drawn Peter nearer to Himself than ever; but, for a time, he went still farther away. O, how like the poor sinner under conviction, who chooses rather to be alone, than in any company, even with the Lord Jesus.

### THE FLESH: ITS CHARACTER.

**E**NTIRELY BAD. *Rom. vii. 18*. "In me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing;" "The carnal mind is enmity against God," *Rom. viii. 7*, and, therefore, "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." "Incurably wicked," *Jer. xvii. 9*; "Corrupt," *Eph. iv. 22*; we are by nature "dead in trespasses and sins," *Eph. ii. 1-5*; we are therefore to have "no confidence in the flesh," *Phil. iii. 3*, for it is "deceitful above all things," *Jer. xvii. 9*.

Believers in the Lord Jesus are *completely* delivered by His *death* from the flesh and its doom, *Rom. vi. 6-11*, and have been quickened together with Him; and have thus a new nature entirely apart from the flesh which still dwelleth in them, but which is *reckoned dead and abolished* by the death of Christ, so that they are *not in the flesh*, *Rom. viii. 9*, nor *under the law*, *Rom. vi. 14*, for the law was given to men in the flesh, and was continually transgressed by them: for the flesh could not be subject to it, as it is *entirely* wicked, and the law was holy, just, and good. But now believers are born again, and thus have a *new life* in Christ, who is raised from the dead, and now can *delight* in the will of God after the inward man, which is created in righteousness and true holiness, on the ground of Jesus' death on the cross for our sins. Therefore our daily concern should be to rejoice in the Lord, and to have *no confidence in the flesh*; for being thus delivered from it, it has no claims on us; all has been completely met in righteousness, and for ever, by the death of Jesus. And thus we are debtors for ever to Him for His great love, in thus saving us eternally from sin, Satan, and the world; and we shall be with Him for ever in the glory, to show forth the riches of His grace throughout the eternal ages. And to Him *alone* shall be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

W. G. S.

FRUIT.—"The simple reason," saith Andrew Fuller, "why the preaching of the Word does not produce more effect, is simply because we *do not expect more*."



## I T T A I.

WHEREFORE goest thou with me?  
Said the King disowned—  
Said the King, despised, rejected,  
Disenthroned.

'Go, return unto thy place,  
To thy king of yore—  
Here a pilgrim and a stranger,  
Nothing more.

Not for thee the cities fair,  
Hills of corn and wine;  
All was portioned ere thou camest—  
Nought is thine.

Wandering forth where'er I may,  
Banished from my own—  
Shame, rejection I can grant thee,  
That alone.

Turn and take thy brethren back,  
With thy people dwell;  
I have loved thee—I, the Outcast:  
Fare thee well.'

Then unto the crownless King,  
On the Kedron's shore,  
All the wilderness before him,  
Ittai swore,—

'As the Lord lives, and the King,  
Ever lord to me,  
Where in death or life he dwelleth  
I will be.'

'Go, pass over,' spake the King:  
Then passed Ittai o'er;  
Passed into the place of exile,  
From the shore.

He, and all his little ones,  
Granted by that word,  
Shame, rejection, homeless wandering,  
With their lord.

'Go, pass over!'—words of grace,  
Spoken, Lord, to me;  
That in death or life, where Thou art,  
I might be.

Dead, and crucified with Thee,  
Passed beyond my doom;  
Sin and law for ever silenced  
In Thy tomb.

Passed beyond the mighty curse,  
Dead, from sin set free;  
Not for Thee earth's joy and glitter,  
Not for me.

Dead—the sinner past and gone,  
Not the sin alone;  
Living—where Thou art in glory,  
On the throne.

Hidden there with Christ in God,  
That blest life I share;  
Christ it is Who liveth in me—  
Liveth *there*.

'He who serves Me,' spake His lips,  
'Let him follow Me,  
And where I am, shall My servant  
Ever be.'

Follow—where His steps lead on,  
Through the golden street,  
Far into the depths of glory  
Track His feet.

Till unto the throne of God—  
Of the Lamb—I come,  
There to share the blessed welcome,  
Welcome home!

There, with Him whom man despised,  
In the light above,  
Those whom God His Father honours,  
Such His love.

## GENESIS.

CHAP. XVI.—In chap. xv. we have sonship and heirship. Here Hagar and her son Ishmael, typical of the law and the covenant of works.

Hence in Hagar and Sarah we get two systems: one of law, gendering to bondage; the other of grace, liberty. The two cannot possibly be united (Gal. iv. 22-25).

Chap. xvii.—A fresh revelation to Abraham concerning Isaac the promised heir. Circumcision typical of death to the flesh (Col. ii. 11).

Chaps. xviii., xix.—Abraham illustrative of the faithful in separation unto God, interceding for the saints mixed up with the objects of vengeance. Lot, the worldly saint, saved only as by fire. The doom of Sodom and Gomorrah a picture of the final doom of the impenitent and ungodly world (Jude 7; 2 Peter ii. 6; Rev. xx. 14).

Chap. xx.—Abraham and Sarah illustrative of the faithful failing in maintaining their real relationship before the world; hence subject to its rebuke (Luke xxii. 55, 61; 1 Peter iv. 15).

Chap. xxi.—Isaac the heir of promise born, type of Christ. Hagar the child of the flesh cast out.

Chap. xxii.—Isaac, type of Christ in death and resurrection (Eph. i., ii.)

Chap. xxiii.—The death of Sarah, type or figure of Israel set aside for a time (Rom. xi.)

Chap. xxiv.—Isaac, type of Christ as the bridegroom in resurrection; Rebekah of the Church the bride, a beautiful picture of a heart won for Christ, "whom having not seen we love;" Eliezer, of the Holy Ghost (John xiv. 17, 26). "When He is come, He will guide; He shall not speak from Himself; will show you things to come" (John xvi. 13).

Chap. xxv.—Isaac, type of Christ as heir of all things; Jacob and Esau born, type of "flesh" and "spirit," the "natural" and the "spiritual" (Rom. viii.; Gal. v. 17; Heb. xii. 16).

Chap. xxvi.—Isaac falls into the same sin as his father Abraham, type of the believer proving unfaithful to his calling. Isaac growing rich in the land of the Philistines, who envy him, illustrative of spiritual prosperity (Psalm xxxvii. 19). The "wells" "filled up" of the world, the "flesh," and the "devil," and

"earthly things" choking the Word, and hindering the outflow of the spirit of life in the soul (Matt. xiii. 19-22; Gal. iv. 9).

Chap. xxviii.—Jacob type of Israel cast out a wanderer, but watched over by the God of Israel: hence Jacob may be looked at as a type of Israel, heir of the promises according to the flesh.

Chap. xxix.—Jacob, type of Christ; Rachel, the Jew; Leah, the Gentile.

From Chap. xxix. to xxxi., we have Jacob serving under Laban, both bargain-makers, both exhibiting craft and cunning, both seeking to outwit each other, illustrative of the Christian mixed up with the worldling, using the world's means and ways to better his condition down here, a condition not of simple dependence upon and faith in God.

Chap. xxxii.—We see Jacob prays, and *then* trusts to his own means and plans, and has more faith in his *presents* than his God (verse 20). Hence he has to learn the lesson at Peniel (no confidence in the flesh), and his name changed from Jacob (supplanter) to Israel (a prince of God).

Chap. xxxiii.—Jacob's flesh still unsubdued, he exhibits the same cunning here (verses 13, 14) as in the previous chapter.

Chap. xxxiv., verse 13.—We see Jacob's sons acting deceitfully like their father, and a sad blot on Jacob and his sons' characters.

Chap. xxxv.—Jacob's idols and strange gods buried under an oak in Shechem. In chap. xxviii. 17, we have the "House of God," here the "God of the house" (El-bethel)—*God* the object of worship. Rachel dies as soon as she gives birth to Benjamin (son of my right hand), type of Christ risen at the right hand of God.

Chaps. xxxvii. to l.—The history of Joseph, who is a beautiful type of Christ, hated by his brethren and by the world, yet ultimately the saviour of both and preserver of life (chap. xxxix). These chapters give in figure the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that shall follow, in which the "Jew" and the "Gentile," as well as the "Church," will share, when He will be "King over all the earth." Thus it is that the blessing of Jacob's sons is so grandly prophetic.

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SINS unpardoned stop the way to heaven.

## LETTER.

DEAR BROTHER,—It was not without sorrow and pain that I read in the June Witness the letter on the present condition of the Church. The causes of this sorrow were twofold. In the first place, there is so much that is true in the letter, that we must needs be humbled as we consider how much of high sounding profession is belied by results. But one cause of this, I am persuaded, is to be found in the common but lamentable mistake that seems to me to underlie the whole of the letter in question; and I was therefore not a little sorry to read such a letter in your pages.

From beginning to end the writer speaks of giving up one set of things to adopt another, in order that certain desirable results may be obtained. His own summary of his position is contained in the last paragraph but one of the letter, in the following words. "We gave up, I repeat, formality, unreality, prayer books, and limited and incompetent ministry, to obtain God's full blessing, and to show others the difference between words and power, realities and assumptions."

Now is not this starting altogether on a false principle? Though somewhat differently expressed, it is in effect the same thing as what we hear from so many whose consciences have never been awakened as to God's demands for implicit obedience: "I go where I think I shall get the most good."

No wonder if such turn back, when they fail to get all the good they came for. And this equally if they have left one sect for another, or if they have turned from all sects to assemble with a few believers gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus.

When God brought a remnant of His people back from Babylon, the prominent feature of the great revival was that Israel carried out what was found written in the law of Moses, simply because it was God's commandment. We are told that Ezra was "a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given," and that he had "prepared his heart to SEEK the law of the Lord, and to DO it, and to TEACH in Israel statutes and judgments" Ez. vii. 6, 10. And we have repeated instances of the reading of the law being followed promptly by obedience to its demands. (See Neh. viii. 13-18, xiii. 1-3).

Doubtless much blessing to their own souls followed, and much of the power of God's presence was known by them; but if any had carried out what they found in the law of Moses only because they expected unmingled blessing and immunity from all the weakness

and unprofitableness of the past, they must have been grievously disappointed, and ready to give the whole thing up. Both the books of Ezra and Nehemiah close with sad scenes, sufficient to turn away any who had recently been drawn back from Babylon through the report that God's perfect order was established again in Jerusalem.

"For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you" 1 Cor. xi. 19. They are painful tests to be subjected to, but they will not fail to sift out those who kept God's commandments simply for what they hoped to gain, even spiritually; and to manifest those who obey because God commands and for no other reason.

I would not on any account shut my eyes to the reproach that arises from our assuming a position which we cannot maintain in the power of God. Would to God that there were more in us of the spirit of Ezra, when he proclaimed a fast by the river Ahava, to seek a right way from God, and safe guidance on their perilous journey, lest all their talk to the king about the power and sufficiency of their God should be belied. (See Ezra viii. 21-23, 31).

But such godly jealousy and watchfulness will surely never lead to talking as if it was useless to come back to God's commandments. When Israel in their latter day indifference were saying, "It is vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance?" God characterised those words as stout words against Himself" (Mal. iii. 13, 14). How precious to Him in such a day was the talking together of those "that feared the Lord and thought upon His name" (ver. 16).

Is it not more of the fear of the Lord that we want among us! "Happy is the man that feareth alway" (Prov. xxviii. 14). "Great peace have they that love Thy law, and they shall have no stumbling-block" Psalm cxix. 165.

We may do a thousand things, all right and scriptural in themselves, in the hope of getting much joy and blessing, but this is not the true spirit of obedience, and little wonder if our souls are lean as the result. "But by them (the judgments of the Lord) is thy servant warned; and in keeping of them there is GREAT REWARD" (Psalm xix. 11). If our souls have found no reward, we shall do well to ask ourselves if we have ever obeyed God at all, however much we may have practised a form of obedience.

A. J. H.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

**NOTE.**—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to “prove all things,” and “hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.

### QUESTION NO. XXIV.

*Should a brother who was “put away” upon scriptural grounds be permitted to minister in the assembly immediately after he is restored to fellowship?*

#### REPLY.

Should we not arrive at an answer to this question by seeing from Scripture what should result from ministering in the assembly? In 1 Cor. xiv., where ministry in the assembly is dwelt upon throughout, we find the word “edify” seven times:

“He that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification,” verse 5;  
 “He that prophesieth edifieth the church,” verse 4;  
 “That the church may receive edifying,” verse 5;  
 “Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church,” verse 12;  
 “Let all things be done unto edifying,” verse 26.

Could anything be more explicit than these verses? Edifying or building up should result from ministering, and unless it does so, the ministry is out of place; therefore the apostle says, “He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth *himself*,” verse 4; and referring to prayer in an unknown tongue, he writes, “For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified,” verse 17.

Now to apply this. Could there be edifying if there was a want of confidence? With sorrow the assembly has had to “put away” a brother. It has resulted in blessing, produced “godly sorrow” in him, and they have restored him to their fellowship. Surely such an one in the remembrance of his sin, and the dishonour brought upon the Lord by it, would be slow to put himself forward. No rule could be laid down as to the length of *time* that should elapse, for it is *confidence* that is needed, and such an one should wait till he found he had it.

It might be said, but if they have confidence enough to restore him to fellowship, should that not also restore him as to ministry? On reflection, however, it will be found there is a difference.

Public ministry in the Word might be hindered for long, whilst private opportunities could be taken to put the Gospel before individuals; and so in connection with the assembly, where there is an amount of publicity (for unsaved ones, and Christians not in fellowship, are often present), *private* ministry might surely precede anything more public until it was discerned that confidence was gained. To force his ministry at once on the assembly would cause many to doubt the

*reality* of his confession of sorrow, whilst to continue to take part after spiritual ones had expressed their dissent from it would grieve, or perhaps even divide. The moment one found that to be the case, he would say to himself, “I will never allow my taking part to produce such an effect; until it can be to edifying, it shall not be at all.” And by so doing would the more quickly show to all the reality of his repentance, and that he only desired to prove it by his life and godly ways.

In conclusion, we may say, to begin *at once* to minister would be almost the sure way to grieve many, to create party feeling, and to hinder acceptable ministry on his part for a longer time. On the other hand, to walk with the Lord *humbled* on account of the past, retiring into the back ground, would result in obtaining the confidence of all, and then, when led of the Lord to minister, it would not be to “edify *himself*,” but the *Church*.

### QUESTION NO. XXV.

*Shall we, who are God's children, know one another personally, when in the glory with Christ?*

#### REPLY.

It is well ever to bear in mind that every natural relationship pertaining to life in the flesh is dissolved by death. Hence, for example, the Divine permission to marry a second time (Rom. vii. 3). The relationships of the New Creation alone are eternal. But this has nothing whatever to do with the question of the mutual recognition of believers in resurrection.

If believers are not to know one another in heaven, we know not how to understand such passages as Matt. viii. 11, Luke xvi. 9, &c.; nor can we see the comfort of 1 Thess. iv., “Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him,” if it be not the hope of seeing again in glory, and holding an eternally restored fellowship, with those fellow-saints from whom death has separated us, in the presence of our Lord Jesus.

And if any instruction is to be derived from the three resurrection miracles performed by our Lord Jesus in the days of His flesh, it is surely that resurrection will restore to the heart's eternal embrace those in Christ whom death has severed. The daughter of Jarius is restored to her parents. The widow's son at

Nain is delivered to his mother. Lazarus is seen again in the family circle at Bethany.

Moreover, memory will recall the providence and discipline that marked the path of our pilgrimage (Deut. viii. 2), and the life service of each believer will be reviewed at the judgment-seat of Christ (2 Cor. v. 10).

But how can this be, without also recalling the persons with whom our spiritual history was so intimately interwoven? And if there be memory and intercourse, surely there will be recognition of those in company with whom we trod the wilderness.

The thought of earthly relationships being dissolved by death is not welcome to the carnal mind, and many spiritual persons feel as though they would thus be losers. But to illustrate this in a very simple way:—A man may have married one who was related to him as cousin. The moment his cousin became his wife, the former comparatively distant relationship is lost sight of in the much nearer relationship of husband and wife. But this only feebly shows forth how infinitely nearer and dearer is the relationship of all believers as the “members of the body of Christ,” and “members one of another,” than any earthly tie. That this oneness exists here by the Holy Ghost is true, but alas! it is little realized because of our carnality. In heaven it will be fully known in the power of the Spirit of God, who will no longer be hindered or grieved.

#### QUESTION No. XXVI.

*Can an assembly gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus claim to be in sole possession of the Lord's Table in the town where they meet, so as to be warranted in saying that all who meet otherwise are “turning their backs upon the Lord's Table?”*

#### REPLY.

It is not for us to define what is *not* “the Lord's Table.” What we have to be sure of is, that we are so gathered, that there is no scriptural ground to question our being really gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus. The Lord may be pleased to manifest Himself to the souls of His own redeemed ones, though gathered through ignorance in a very unscriptural way. But if He has opened our eyes to see more of His mind concerning the assembly, it would be sin to go in with their unscriptural ways, and the blessing would not be ours.

#### QUESTION No. XXVII.

*Is the Lord Jesus verily present in person at our meeting for the breaking of bread?—Matt. xviii. 20.*

#### REPLY.

Most certainly the promise of Matt. xviii. 20 is the heritage of this dispensation until our gathering together unto Christ in the air (1 Thess. iv. 17; 2 Thess. ii. 1), and ought in no sense to be limited to the time of His sojourn upon earth.

The question is: In what sense is He present in the midst where two or three are gathered unto His name?

Personally He is at the right hand of the Father. When He comes again He will descend from the Father's throne into the air, to call His saints from the earth and from the grave unto Himself. He does not “descend from heaven” until that time, therefore it is not in that personal sense that He is present wherever two or three are gathered unto His name.

But the Holy Spirit, “the Spirit of Christ,” is given to the saints in order that the idea of distance between Christ and His people may be quite done away with—so that we now have access by the Spirit through Christ unto the Father, *i.e.*, within the veil; and in like manner that same Spirit manifests Christ to His people, giving them to realize His presence, very near, yea, even “in their midst.”

Thus His presence in the midst of His gathered ones is not a mere theory or imagination, neither is it a corporeal presence as taught in the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation, but it is a “Real Presence,” inasmuch as it is the living Christ at God's right hand, brought nigh to us, and we to Him, by the Holy Spirit.

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## SANCTIFICATION.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. R. C.

**W**E do not always get at the correct meaning of a word by taking it as it is commonly understood; especially so in divine things, for they have been more thoroughly twisted and wrested than any other subject; Satan desiring to make as many difficulties as possible.

The common idea of Sanctification is that it is a sort of cleansing; or a process by which something that is defiled becomes cleansed, or something that is bad becomes good. I want to shew that this is not the scriptural idea.

One scripture which proves this is John x. 36, "Him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world," etc. Here the Father is said to have *sanctified* and sent *Christ* into the world. Another is John xvii. 19, "For their sakes I *sanctify myself*." Here the Lord Jesus is speaking of sanctifying Himself. The Old Testament also bears out the same thing. Gen. ii. 3, "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it." Thus, *before sin entered*, God blessed that special day on which He rested, and sanctified it. From all these Scriptures it is evident that Sanctification cannot possibly mean the process of cleansing what is defiled, or of making a bad thing good.

Turn further to Ex. xiii. 2, "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Sanctify unto Me all the first-born." Here we get the real root meaning of the word. It was *to set apart*. So distinctly is this the radical meaning, that the word translated

'sanctified,' is in other places translated 'accused.' If it was set apart for God, it was sanctified; if it was set apart for judgment, it was equally so. Thus God sanctified the seventh day, and set it apart for Himself. Thus the first-born of man and beast in Israel, after the institution of the Passover, was set apart for God. Thus the first-born of that was offered in sacrifice, was sanctified—set apart. And just so the Father, in the counsels of eternity, set apart His own beloved Son for the work of redemption, He was the Lamb set apart for the work before the foundation of the world (1 Pet. i. 20). When the Lord Jesus came into this world, He sanctified Himself. As the father *set Him apart* for the work of redemption, so He *set Himself apart*, with no other object before Him but this one work—everything tending to this one object, the fulfilment of His Father's will. And so that same Blessed One was set apart in resurrection also, for the service of the Priesthood inside the veil.

I think these passages are sufficient to shew us the meaning of the word. Turn now to a few passages where the word is used. In Jude, 1st verse, we find "sanctified by God the Father." The distinction commonly drawn between sanctification and justification is, that justification is an act; sanctification, a work. I don't admit the justice of the distinction; still, there is a measure of truth in it. It is important that we admit the measure of truth we find in everything; and not reject the truth when we reject the error.

There are different aspects of sanctification:—"Sanctified by God the Father"; "Sanctified by Christ

Jesus"; "Sanctified by the Holy Ghost"; "Sanctified by the blood"; "Sanctified through the truth." All these are different aspects of one great truth: the believer being set apart for God.

With that idea before our minds, we get at once the connection of the different aspects of the word "sanctified." The word "holy" is just the same word. Real holiness is being set apart for God; and "holiness" in Heb. xii. 10, is the same word as "sanctification" in 1 Cor. i. 30. That familiar word, "saint" also means "sanctified one." This shows what a wrong thing it is to attach the word "saint" to some believers and not to others, as if God called people saints because of their walk. God calls us saints because, before the foundation of the world, He chose us in Christ, and set us apart for Himself. A saint is just one who has been sanctified by God the Father, in Christ Jesus; sanctified by His blood; sanctified by the Spirit; and sanctified—in measure—by the truth.

Before coming to sanctification through the truth, let us glance at the other aspects of the word.

When we are spoken of as "sanctified by God the Father," it always refers back to before the foundation of the world. Heb. x. 9, "Then said He (Christ), Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." Now, mark, when Adam had failed, when man had broken God's law, then comes forward the One set apart, saying, "Lo, I come." The first man has failed; the Second Man comes in. The first covenant is broken; He comes to seal the new covenant with His blood, and to accomplish redemption. "By the which will (the will of God which He had covenanted to perform, from the foundation of the world) we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

"For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." By one offering which He offered upon Calvary, He has perfectly and eternally set apart for God those whom the Father has given Him. You will find how this corresponds with Eph. i., from the third verse. There we have, chosen by God's will and purpose, before the foundation of the world, set apart in Christ Jesus by God the Father. This throws light on the remaining words in Jude, 1st verse, "Sanctified by God the Father, preserved by Christ Jesus, and called." Blessed be the name of God, those who are thus set apart are preserved in Christ Jesus, who is charged with the responsibility of

those whom the Father has given Him. "And this is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me, I should lose nothing; but should raise it up again at the last day." All that have been given to Him are preserved in Him; and when the day comes, they shall be called in power—as Lazarus was—out of the grave, from death to life.

For another aspect of sanctification, see Heb. ii., from the 10th verse. "For it became Him, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one; for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." Compare Ex. xxix. 37, and Matt. xxiii. 19. "Ye fools and blind; for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?" That is to say, the moment a gift was placed upon the altar, it belonged to God, and was set apart to Him. So Christ is the Sanctifier, and the sanctified are those who believe in Him—they who *are* sanctified, not in process of being sanctified.

"Go to My brethren, and say, I ascend to My Father and your Father; to My God, and your God."

He is the first-begotten; we, the many sons being brought unto glory. Not that we call Him Brother. I don't think we are warranted in Scripture to do so; but He is not ashamed to call us brethren; while we call Him Lord. Not ashamed, because of His condescension? That's not it. He is not ashamed to call us brethren because of our personal dignity; because we are children of His own Father—born of God—and therefore His brethren. Blessed thought, God never sees us apart from His Son.

1 Cor. i. 2, "To them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus." Not "that are in process of being sanctified." Some people think that when a man is *thoroughly* sanctified, he is made meet for heaven. We *are made meet* through the blood of Christ by faith. The thief on the cross was made meet for paradise that very moment he believed in Christ. We are not being made meet for heaven, but our Father "hath made us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." The youngest believer, who only believed in Jesus a few days ago, is as fit to go to heaven as the believer who has been fifty years converted. He is made meet at once, because sanctified in Christ Jesus. Observe the same thought in Heb. ii. 11, "All of one"; and 1 Cor. i. 30, "OF HIM are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is



made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." Christ is all I need. To be found in Him is to be perfect for ever. From the moment He washed us from our sins, to the time that His redemption power will snatch us from the grave to His throne, first and last, we have the whole of our salvation in Him.

Heb. xiii. 12. Just as Moses pitched the tabernacle outside the camp, after the sin in connection with the golden calf was committed, separating thus the people from sinful worship; so the Lord Jesus, in order that He might separate us to God, suffered outside the gate. Outside the gate was the place where the leprous ones were put; where those who were to be judged and stoned were taken; and He, that He might sanctify us with His own blood, took His place with those who were delivered unto judgment. Thus we are set apart for God.

One thought in connection with sanctification: If you and I—spirit, soul, and body—have been set apart for God; have been, by His grace, redeemed for Himself by the blood of Christ; what are we doing when we take the redeemed members of our body, and use for self and sin that which God has set apart for Himself at the cost of the blood of His own Son? Nothing is so abhorrent to God as to profane that which was set apart for His own use.

In 1 Cor. vi. 11, we have "Sanctified by the Spirit." Compare 1 Peter i. 2, and notice that whether I am looked at as sanctified by God the Father; or whether, as here in 1st Peter, it is according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, sanctification by God the Father *is always before the foundation of the world*. See 2 Thess. ii. 13, "God has from the beginning (always taking us back to before the foundation of the world) chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." Again, look at 1st Peter, "Unto obedience." What obedience? "The obedience of faith" (Rom. xvi. 26). That is the obedience spoken of here. We were set apart by God in eternity, and by the Holy Spirit's quickening power at our conversion. God looked down the ages, and foreknew the exact time—hour and minute—that you and I would receive Christ. It was the mighty power of the Spirit of God which made the truth reach our consciences, and broke our hearts, and made us tremble, and brought the Gospel to us in power, and so set you and me apart

for God, there and then, as regenerated persons. It is blessed thus to see how God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, have all been at work for *you and me*. Like Heb. ix. 14. No man interferes there. No human hand draws near to hinder or to help. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were there at Calvary in these hours of darkness, while "He through the eternal Spirit offered Himself to God" for us who have come to Him simply by faith.

And now what follows? In John xvii., the Lord Jesus prays, "Sanctify them through the truth." What will the truth do for us? If we allow it to reach us, it will separate us to God. What is the measure of my sanctification? Just the measure of my obedience to the Word. *Sanctification through the truth* is a process; not a thing done once and for ever. It is a day by day, hour by hour process in which the truth takes possession of thought after thought, word after word, and seeks to conform all to the mind of God. And so we are sanctified by God the Father, complete once and for ever before the foundation of the world; sanctified by Christ Jesus through His blood; set apart by the Holy Ghost at our conversion; and sanctified by the truth day by day.

Eph. v. 25. Compare Lev. viii., and you will find that Aaron and his sons, as God's priests, were sanctified together; but every time they went near the altar, they washed their hands and feet at the laver. We ought to have daily dealings with Christ as *our Laver*. He girded Himself with a towel and stooped down and washed his disciples' feet; and He is ready to do the same for us still. Let us sit down at the feet of Jesus when we read His Word, or hear it ministered, and seek to hear in the Book, *His voice*. Do we read the Scripture in communion with Himself—hear His claims asserted by it, and own His authority over us? When we come to read His Word, do we come as sitting at the feet of Jesus, seeking to be cleansed by the truth, and brought into subjection to Christ? May God teach us to come to His word thus in subjection to Him, and the result will be that we shall day by day be more and more separated unto God, more and more conformed to the likeness of Him who was in all things sanctified by the truth.

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As many a ship has been lost through simple neglect, so many a man has lost his soul through ignorance of its condition.

## DAVID.

**D**AVID was in the hands of Jehovah, and so also were his people; and although it was for discipline, love, unutterable love, and unfailing wisdom, guided the hands which held the rod. Jehovah was chastening His own.

The three days' pestilence began, and fearful was the scourge; the angel of destruction went forward with his work until seventy thousand of Israel had fallen before him; but when he came to the city of the king, and his hand was stretched out over it, Jehovah repented, and David pleaded.

Dear reader, hearken to his pleading. He pleaded like one whose heart was true to Israel; like the man who had for their sakes endured his brethren's envy, taunt, and ire; like him who, judged from a human standpoint, had jeopardized his life to save his father's kid, and afterward taken that life in his hand, in single combat with Philistia's boastful champion, to save Jehovah's kid, the armies of Israel; who had endured much both for and from the people instrumentally saved by his hand, yet loved them still: He was like himself. Clothed in sack-cloth, he and the elders of Israel prostrated themselves before Jehovah. David confessed his sin, took to himself the blame, and prayed that Israel might be spared, although he and his house should suffer. "Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? Even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but as for these sheep, what have they done? Let Thine hand I pray thee, O Jehovah, my God, be on me, and on my father's house, but not on Thy people, that they should be plagued."

It was enough, the chastisement had reached its appointed measure, it had produced its proper fruit; the wounded heart and tearful eye, the unselfish pleading of Israel's humbled king sufficed, and the plague was stayed. But mark, dear fellow-believer, the connection: On what ground can the tears be noticed, the prayers be heard, and Jehovah be moved to call back the sword of the destroying angel? Only in connection with blood, a sacrificial beast must bleed, the innocent for the guilty die; and that on the spot where the plague was stayed—to mark Jehovah's mercy, loving kindness and the power of prayer—"By the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." Thither, at the bidding of Gad, instructed by the angel of Jehovah, David went up. Araunah saw the

king and his servants coming, went to meet him, and bowed himself before him. Having heard the object of the king's visit, he, in a princely way, as a king to a king, offered David all—threshing floor, oxen, and instruments—saying, "Jehovah, thy God, accept thee." This generous offer the king graciously refused, saying, "God forbid that I should offer that which cost me nothing," so he purchased all, offered his burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and the plague was stayed. Christ (then, in purpose; afterwards, in fact,) was his burnt-offering, and no less his peace; in Him, the offerer was accepted; and through Him, the chastisement was removed.

Thus the monarch of Israel, clothed in sack-cloth, presented his offering where (as is supposed) his father Abraham once built his altar laid on it his only son, Isaac, and afterwards slew and burnt the ram in his stead. Here also, with mingled grief and joy, David fixed the site of that building for which he made provision, receiving additional instruction respecting it, and which Solomon afterwards built. Methinks the believing reader will discern a shadow here, and by spiritual instinct pass on to the Substance, to that blessed One who has stayed the judgment of God against sin for those who shelter under His blood, rest in His sacrifice by faith, bearing the judgment for them, and who, as the stone rejected by the Jewish builders, in His crucifixion was (because His death met the demands of God), laid by God in resurrection as the foundation and corner stone of that unique building, the Church of the living God, and constituted by the same God, Head of the body, the Church and Temple of the Holy Ghost.

Thus we see grace triumphing, and honour put upon the chastened saint; for, although it is humbling and sorrowful to see David—when so far advanced in life, so near the time of his sleeping with his fathers, after such experience and discipline as that of which he had been the subject—acting foolishly, still the close of the scene is honourable; he doing one of the great things of his life, after fainting in the battle field, an honour from his God, under whose hand he had bowed.

Dear reader, remember that the next best thing to obedience is quickly to accept our Father's correction for disobedience; to bear the rod and Him who hath appointed it; this is wisdom. To resist, to complain, is folly; for it will bring more severe correction. In proof of this, turn to Lev. xxvi. you will then see that

the first thirteen verses contain exhortation to obedience, and promises of blessing as the result; at verse 14, commence warnings and threatenings against disobedience; and in verse 18, Jehovah threatens to punish them seven times more; this is thrice repeated afterwards in verses 21, 24-28, presupposing their persistence in disobedience, until at length they bow, confess their sin, and *accept* their punishment, and then blessing returns (verse 40-43). The same lesson is taught us by Job's continued trial, and its blessed results; so also in Jehovah's ways with Jonah, whilst in the New Testament the apostle Peter exhorts to the same, and promises similar results. "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due season."\*

David's end drew near, flesh and heart failed, and his movements were almost limited to his room, where he was cherished in his old age by the companionship and ministry of Abishag, the fair Shunamitish virgin.

Yet another trial befel the aged man of God, again he felt the point of that sword which was never to leave his house; again, also, he proved the loving kindness of Jehovah. Adonijah, his indulged and petted son, whom the king had never displeased at any time by saying, "Why hast thou done so?" A goodly man born after Absalom and partaking of his spirit, arose and sought to usurp his father's throne. We know not if he was aware of his father's purpose and promise to Bath-sheba that Solomon her son should succeed him in the kingdom; but he was guilty of treason. He called together most of the king's sons, with Joab, captain of the host, and Abiathar the priest, to feast with him at "the stone of Zoheloth (serpent) a fitting place for one who was acting as a serpent in the grass.

Jehovah's eye was open to all this, and upon David, His anointed, for his good. Nathan the prophet also heard of it. True to the king and to Bath-sheba, he instructed her to obtain an interview with David. She was ushered into his presence and as the "Daughter of an oath"§ reminded the king of his oath to her that Solomon should succeed him. "My lord, thou swarest by Jehovah, thy God, unto thine handmaid, saying, 'assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne;' and now, behold

\* Read carefully the prophecy of Hosea, and Luke xv., which teach the same blessed lesson.

§ Bath-sheba meaning "the daughter of an oath."

Adonijah reigneth." Thus she pleaded, and disclosed the plot.

Whilst she was speaking, Nathan arrived, entered the king's chamber, and confirmed all that Bath-sheba had said. Bath-sheba was recalled, and David sware, saying, "As Jehovah liveth, who hath redeemed me out of all distress, even as I sware unto thee by Jehovah, God of Israel, saying, Assuredly, Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day."

At the commandment of David, Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah were called before him, and received instructions for anointing Solomon king with all the honours that could be given him; so Solomon rode on the king's own mule and sat in the throne of David amid the congratulations and expressed wishes of the people for honour and blessing beyond the blessing and honour granted to his father David; and David bowed himself on his bed, and worshipped.

All this was to David's joy, but to Adonijah's shame and dismay; as also to those who were with him. Again we see Jehovah using His servant in his last days, when confined to his palace, and mostly to his chamber. A child of God, *in communion* with Him, can never be *useless*; he will bring forth his fruit in season, choice fruit in old age.

We come now to the last days, and closing scenes of David's eventful life. Now the days of David drew near that he should die" (1 Kings ii. 1), and he charged Solomon his son. The order of the charge is instructive, let us note it:

(1) Personal. "Be strong, and shew thyself a man; and keep the charge of Jehovah, thy God, to walk in His ways, and keep His statutes, and His judgments, and His testimonies; that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou turnest thyself," &c. Almost the echo of the charge given to Joshua before him (Joshua i. 6, 7, 9, and 18), and like that which Paul afterwards gave to his son in the faith, Timothy, "Take heed to thyself and to the doctrine."

(2) He gave him charge to execute judgment on certain persons who had deserved it during David's life; but now left it to Solomon to visit it according to his wisdom (reminding us of the words, "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men might honour the Son even as they honour the Father who hath sent Him.")

(3) According to 1 Chron. xxii, xxviii, xxix, He

charged him respecting the building of the Temple, the site of which he had fixed; instructions concerning which he had received of Jehovah respecting certain parts of it; and for which, of his own bounty, and spoil of the enemies, he had abundantly prepared. Having done this, and charged Israel respecting Solomon, who was young and tender, "David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David."

Thus closed a reign of forty years, for which the earlier stages of his life were used by Jehovah to prepare him; a reign during which many times went over him and left their impression on him; a reign of sorrow, of conflict, and of much bloodshedding; yet one of blessing and honour to himself and to Israel, and glory to Jehovah. So also closed a life of faith, of obedience, not without failure indeed, yet such that Jehovah gave testimony to it, only excepting one matter, that of Uriah the Hittite. He was a man after God's own heart; who followed Jehovah wholly (save as above) and his conduct made the standard for judging that of his successors, for it is written "They walked," or "they walked not in the ways of their father David."

Beloved reader, let us be indeed warned by any manifestation of nature, of the flesh, in the history of David; but see to it, that, with our higher privileges and far surpassing light, we come not behind him in the life of faith, and walk of truth and grace; remembering still that Christ, not David, is our Pattern, in whom also we are accepted.

H. HEATH.

### PRAYER.

**M**Y GOD! is any hour so sweet,  
From blush of morn to evening star,  
As that which calls me to Thy feet—  
The hour of prayer!

Blest is that tranquil hour of morn,  
And blest that hour of solemn eve,  
When on the wings of faith up-borne,  
The world I leave!

For then a day-spring shines on me,  
Brighter than morn's ethereal glow;  
And richer dews descend from Thee  
Than earth can know.

Lord! till I reach that blissful shore,  
No privilege so dear shall be  
As this, my inmost soul to pour,  
In prayer to Thee.

### EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

**H**OW astonishing, dear brother, is Divine goodness, coming to us every hour; and we do not see it rightly, unless we see along with it our absolute unworthiness; while, too, we see every mercy coming to us through the pierced hands of the Great Intercessor. Such mercy, to such creatures, through such a channel—and this not only on occasion, but continually—may well fill us with adoring amazement.

You lament the fact that, in the midst of our unequalled Gospel privileges, such as the spread of copies of Scripture, extension of knowledge of the letter, &c., &c., there should not be a fuller manifestation of the divine life in its power. Alas! yes, dear brother. Perhaps one main lesson of our very day may be that the Church below, and the intelligent creation elsewhere, may learn through us, how utterly worthless *in themselves* is the possession of all external helps of every kind, apart from the Holy Spirit's help to use them in communion with God. In Ecclesiastes, it is very plainly set down, that the *power to enjoy* the world's good things is the gift of God, as well as the world's good things themselves; and that the one gift is quite distinct from the other. And, similarly, the *POWER TO PROFIT* by the unprecedented degree of spiritual privilege and opportunity which we enjoy, is God's rich free gift as much as the privileges themselves are. And, as is abundantly seen everywhere, in our own day, the one may be enjoyed without the other. And yet, though the possession of unusual privilege does not at all secure blessing to the possessor, it never fails to entail on him unusual responsibilities. Oh, may we be enabled to make faithful use of our unequalled opportunities, for the attainment of the very ends for which the gracious Giver lent them to us. Whenever this is not done, the very blessing becomes a curse (Mal. ii. 2).

I have been deeply grieved by glancing over a notice of the "Scotch Sermons" in the *Weekly Review* for 26th June. Probably you have seen it. It is to be found on page 617. Unless the notice be positively slanderous, how humiliating, how heart-breaking to think that our national theology is becoming such a mass of baptized Deism. We have trying times at hand; nay, the trying times have come. **THE LORD REIGNETH, and He will take good care of His own cause;**

but the heart sinks when one thinks of the mischief that is being done through the utter folly of man's self-wise wisdom.

Most heartily do I endorse your remarks about Professor Smith. I did not know he was such a mere youth. Surely, surely, things are wrongly conducted when the appointment of *any* youth to such a most responsible office is possible. There is no department of spiritual service that approaches this in importance; and consequently none that so demands men full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith, aye, and also of EXPERIENCE, to fill it. But *mere brain* goes for nearly as much in the Church as in the world; and if we will persist in sowing to the flesh, we must be content to reap the inevitable corruption. In the middle ages the Church left her Lord, and leaned instead on an arm of flesh, in the shape of alliances with kings and princes, and trust in the force of arms; and we see the dreadful issue. And, in our day, her confidence is quite as carnal, not so much in princes and armies now, but in human logic, and subtle brains, and loads of learning, and other idols, that can as little help her to do her PURELY SPIRITUAL work, as the warrior's sword could do, or the emperor's alliance. We sow the wind, we reap the whirlwind.

It is heart-breaking to see how completely, in Church matters, the grand truth of the dispensation (that the Church is now under the absolute guidance of the Holy Ghost) is ignored. I don't say that this truth is not adequately recognized; it is not recognised AT ALL—in fact, it seems to be practically unknown. The same policy that shapes the deliberations of the world's assemblies, equally shapes those of the Church; this fact indicating that the most elementary truth in the Christian system is disbelieved, *viz., that in the sphere of the new life, in Head and in members, everything, EVERYTHING, is done by the Holy Spirit.* So utterly helpless are we of ourselves, that we cannot, apart from Him, discover wherein our sinfulness consists (John xvi. 9), so ignorant, even as disciples, that we don't even know what to ask in prayer (Rom. viii.) He then constitutes for us the grand promise of the New Testament, just as the Christ constituted the grand promise of the Old. And the grace of the one is just as indispensable to us as the grace of the other—in fact, the two are only one, and cannot be separated. For either an individual disciple, then, or for the Church to overlook Him, is simply to secure that,

whatever we may set ourselves to do, God shall not be truly served in the doing of it.

And yet, amid all these distressing confusions and turmoils, God reigns, and His will is being done; His will not being quite that which any one of us takes it to be. In faith we lean our tired hearts on His wisdom, love, and power; and, while we commit to His protection the Church—dear to ourselves, but dearer far to Him—we commit also to Him all our loved ones, with ourselves, assured that He will accept the confiding deposit (2 Tim. i. 12)."

J. D.

### THE CAUSES AND COURSE OF PETER'S FALL.

By J. M.

"Did I not see thee in the garden with Him?" (John xviii. 26).

FOURTH.—"Peter followed Him afar off" (Mark xiv. 54) Sin committed against a holy, just God, sooner or later, will—it must—have its reward.

Left all alone, and keeping a respectable distance between himself and yon ungodly crowd which surrounded the "Lamb of God," Peter, with heavy heart and hanging head, reflecting on what he had done—what Jesus had said by way of reproof for his rash act—what he had seen Him do with that smitten-off ear! Half convinced of his error, and yet half inclined to think he had only done what was right after all; the one moment thinking himself wholly justified, the next entirely condemned. "Conscience also bearing witness, and his thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing" him. Bewildered! confounded! not knowing how to decide; with faltering steps he reached at length the palace-door of the high priest; and, like the thistle-down before the autumn breeze, he quailed and tottered before the softly-blown satanic breath, when a simple question was put to him through a simple servant maid (John xviii. 17). That Christian who neglects daily secret prayer will soon neglect the daily study of God's Word—follow "afar off," and be in danger of denying the Master in some form or other.

Also, the Christian who goes only now and again to the fellowship-meeting on Lord's day, who could easily be at every meeting, if the heart were right with God and the soul in a healthy condition, such may soon cease to go at all, and be found guilty of denying their

Lord altogether. Some stay away from that most blessed of all meetings on the pretext that something is wrong with Brother A—, or Sister B—, or with the meeting as a whole, which may be true or not; but if the ground of meeting is right, then the command, Heb. x. 19–25, as well as the promise, are ever the same: Not, “Where two or three” who are entirely without fault “are gathered together in My Name, there am I”—Christ, the perfect, the faultless, the altogether lovely, is “in the midst of them.” Ah, no! But simply, “Where two or three are gathered together in My Name. There’s the condition—that’s the qualification—“My Name.” That is what secures the promise. If “gathered” by the Holy Ghost to the person of Christ—“gathered together,” as a shepherd gathers his sheep, around Himself. “Gathered together in My Name, there am I! in the midst of them” (Matt. xviii. 20). Therefore, being simply “gathered” in His “Name,” He is there, not only to guide the assembly in respect of “worship in the spirit,” according to “truth,” but to detect whatever may go wrong in respect to order, purity of life and doctrine—ready, willing, and able to give grace to the spiritual, who have oversight, to put things right, according to “truth” also. Why then stay away? None who are themselves right ever will.

Those also who see the truth of baptism, that is, as to the *subjects*, believers (Acts ii. 41; viii. 12, 36, 37); the *mode*, immersion (Matt. iii. 16, 17; Acts viii. 38, 39); also the *teaching*, death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. vi. 3–5; Col. ii. 12; 1 Peter iii. 21); and yet refuse to submit to that blessed ordinance of His own appointment (Matt. xviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 15, 16); as well as those of a quick natural temperament, who may be unruly and easily offended when spoken to, are all alike in great danger of denying their Lord in some form or other—for these are but phases of following “Him afar off.”

Dear young Christian reader! beware of the least little step in the wrong direction, the slightest divergence from the way of life and the path of peace, which might lead to tremendous consequences. For those who have turned aside by several steps to return is good. To return immediately after the first wrong step is better. But to turn from taking a wrong step, however small, is best. Ever remember, that “Great peace have they who love Thy law, and nothing shall offend them” (Psalm cxix. 165).

Fifth.—We find that Peter’s next step was, mixing with bad company, his own as well as Christ’s enemies, seeking his own ease and comfort, warming himself at their fire (John xviii. 18).

On one occasion the Lord rebuked him for allowing his fleshly mind to deceive him, and said, “Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.” And then He added (no doubt for the benefit of all His followers) this instructive command, namely, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me.” Had Peter remembered these words, and the circumstances in which they were spoken, he might have stood firm when the tempter again came. And had he denied himself, he never could, never would, have denied his Lord. But having once denied Him, he had no more power to take up his cross; and in order to shirk it altogether he went over to the enemy’s side—perhaps thinking there would be no more assaults from that quarter after identifying himself with them.

But although the world loveth his own, who are followers of that which is evil, yet, for various reasons, they also respect and honour those who are decided followers of that which is good. But they hate our half-and-half, go-between sort of folks. And so, skulking, wavering, undecided Peter, watching and waiting to see how the matter would go with the Master, is again assailed by those who were around that fire.

WE have each of us a soul within, imperishable in its nature, eternal in its destiny; capable of heaven with all its glories, and of hell with all its agonies. Were that destiny now sealed, which would it be?

“HAVE FAITH IN GOD.”—A gardener met in the street one of the children of a family he had heard were in trouble. Calling the little one, he put into his hand a bunch of flowers, saying, “Take them to your mother and tell her to have faith in God.” The child did so, when all the blessedness of this text filled the mother’s soul—“If God so clothe the grass of the field which to day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, Oh ye of little faith.” Have we but one talent, nay have we but half a talent, let us use it. Are we ever so weak and poor in our own eyes, let us do what we can.

## THE TRUE VINE.

JOHN XV.

**G**OD "brought a vine out of Egypt" (Psalm lxxx. 8); but there was no fruit corresponding to all His loving care (Isaiah v. 1-7). He sent His servants to bring Him the fruit, "rising up early and sending them," but they only brought back sad news of *hatred*, instead of the *love* He looked for, and had a right to expect. *Why?* Because the vine was *man*—only *man*; and however cultivated, and sheltered, and blessed, and restrained, *man* "in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans viii. 8).

Now Jesus says, "I am the Vine—the *true* one." He alone it is who, in resurrection life, bears continuous and abundant fruit to God. But *how?* Through *His branches*. All the vigour and zeal for God, and love to the Father, and devotedness to His will, which are pent up in the heart of Jesus, can only find their precious outlet on earth in the fruit borne on His branches here in this world! Am I a branch *in Him*? Then what am I to do? Simply stay where He has put me, and let Him please God *through me*! When He was alone, when as yet the corn of wheat had not fallen into the ground, His life on earth was but one full expression of pleasing God; but now He delights to find thousands of channels—big branches or little twigs—through which He may express the same thing.

What then is *the fruit*? Gal. v. 22, 23, gives the answer. It is the result of union with the risen Christ (Rom. vii. 4), and may be *shown* in a thousand different ways *outwardly* (see Phil. iv. 17; Heb. xiii. 16). It may and *should* be found in all service (though, alas! it is not always there), but the *fruit itself* is not an outward result so much as an inward motive. Fruit is *for God alone* (John xv. 8) It is that love and devotion of heart and will *to Him*, which prompts real service, but which may be, and *is* found where no apparent outlet for it is seen in the way of what we generally call service. No doubt the finest clusters are found by the Husbandman, not so frequently in the activities of life before the world, or the church, as in the secret life which is lived before His eye alone.

Verse 2.—The action of God as the Husbandman. Only His eye can discern where fruit is absolutely wanting, and in that case He "takes away" the fruitless branch out of the world entirely.

Where there is any, He purges it that it may pro-

duce more: that is, He removes whatever hinders the outflow of the life and love and joy of *the Vine* in any particular branch. This may be a painful process *at the time*, but "afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness" (Heb. xii. 11).

Verse 3.—The place of the branch as purged and set in the vine.

Verses 4, 5.—Our responsibility corresponding to God's action. We remain and abide where He has put us, even "in the secret place of the Most High," abiding "under His shadow" (Psalm xci. 1), in perfect rest, and love, and good pleasure, and security. We do not wish it otherwise, and therefore we judge, in ourselves, all that is contrary to our place, and so *act with Him* (1 Cor. ix. 27; xi. 31; 2 Cor. xii. 7-9; Heb. xii. 1, &c.) "Without Me," that is, *independently of Me (choris)*, not as in the margin, "severed from Me." This is exactly what the Lord says of Himself when in this world (see John v. 30).

Verse 6.—The result of not abiding. Takes up the end of verse 4, but with this marked difference, that in verse 6 it is the indefinite pronoun (*tis*) which is used. He does not now say, "if *ye*," &c., because He supposes the case of a *dead* branch. The union of the vine and its branches is in *life*. If there is no life in a branch, there is no union, though it may *appear* to have a place for a time in the vine.

*Self-will* hinders fruit. We must not lay down a certain thing as fruit, and say, "If I do not bear *that*, I am fruitless. That is *self-will*! *The Vine has the will* to bear much fruit to God through every branch, but He must be allowed to do it *in His own way*, and according to *His* thoughts, *not ours*. "Meekness" is the opposite of self-will, and is part of the fruit (Gal. v. 23). Therefore when we do not see what *we* expect, and just give up our own thoughts and will, and let Him have His way—that is fruit! And when we say to Him, "*Thou art the Vine, bear fruit in Thine own way*"—there is "faith," another fruit (Gal. v. 22); and so we go on to "love," "joy," and "peace."

Hallelujah!

A. S. W.

REVERENCE THE SCRIPTURES.—One way of reading the Bible with advantage is to pay it great homage: so that when we come to any part which we cannot connect with other passages we must conclude that this arises from our ignorance, but that the seeming contrarieties are in themselves quite reconcilable.

### WORSHIP.

"There were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast. The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus" (John xii. 28-21).

**H**AVE we come up to worship here,  
Like those few Greeks of old?  
Then what desire doth fill our hearts,  
What would our eyes behold?

They were not gazing at the priests,  
The temple and the gold;  
The courts where beasts for sacrifice,  
In busy trade were sold.

A wondrous Man was at the feast;  
What was the temple now?  
As Spirit-taught they turned away,  
At His dear feet to bow.

"We would see Jesus" was their cry,  
"See Him whose fame we've heard;"  
It was His face they long'd to see,  
And listen to His word.

Oh, for this undivided heart,  
This heart for only One,  
The heart's affections gather'd up,  
And fix'd on One alone!

Yes, we would see the risen Lord,  
To Him our hearts would soar,  
Whose grace has drawn our willing souls  
To worship and adore.

M. W.

### EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

**B**UT, after all, our little restorations are now, at our time of life, but small in degree, and for a very little while. God graciously hastens His work on us towards the close, treating medicinally the ailments of our souls, by the infirmities of our bodies, and meaning to deliver us shortly from all our bodily ailments by His soft-handed, gentle-hearted, holy messenger, whom He prefers to speak of to us under the name of "sleep," but whom we allow ourselves too unbelievably to think of as the "king of terrors." He is all this to the unforgiven sinner; but to those who are partakers of the fellowship of the eternal life—death is ABOLISHED (2 Tim. i. 10), is DESTROYED (Heb. ii. 14); in fact, there is no such thing. Therefore we accept joyously our heavenly Father's most wise and loving disposal of us; *the flesh*,

indeed, disliking what *the flesh* never can do anything but dislike, but the spirit—"willing rather."

As you say, "The days of all of us are drawing to a close." So be it. We can trust our all into the hands of Him whose "nature and whose name is love"—of Him who for us spared not His own Son, and who assures us that He will freely give us all things (Rom. viii. 32)—of Him whose unwearied loving-kindness we have daily experienced for long, long years in a way that it confounds one to think of.

In regard to length of life, as well as to circumstances of life, we *naturally* make mistakes, mistakes which can be corrected only as we look at things in the light of God's presence. Earthly comforts are not true comforts, and earthly good is no true good, IN ITSELF. It is oftener an evil, and an immense one. It ministers to, and is appropriated by a life which we are to account dead, and which therefore we are to mortify daily (Col. iii. 1-3). It strengthens in us that which cannot be sufficiently *impoverished* and *enfeebled*. Nothing is for us a true good, except what, through the further enfeeblement of the old man goes to establish the new—leading us into a closer fellowship with our heavenly Father, and a fuller enjoyment of the riches of His grace.

I find invariably that the rule is: "Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." It seems as if the SPIRIT OF PRAYER, of absolute *dependence*, of single hearted *trust*, and of earnest *desire*, were necessary to put us, and to keep us, in the proper frame of spirit, in which we could receive Divine blessing without misusing it.

I thought I got a little light on a text from the recent elections. I don't think that the children of this world are VERY WISE in this world's things. Proof—the elections. Judged by any standard, how poor the wisdom, how gross the folly! *And yet* our Lord tells us (Luke xvi. 8), that Christians are *less wise in their sphere* than the poor blundering world in *its*. What a wretched affair must our wisdom be in this case! What need for pleading James i. 5, and walking not by the sight of one's eyes, but the Word and guidance of God (2 Cor. v. 7)." J. D.

If you would be saved, you must look away from *self* and its surroundings—away to Jesus; and in Him find all you want—acceptance, holiness, eternal life.



## A HIGH PRIEST OF GOOD THINGS TO COME *(Continued)*.

**L**ET us remember that He has passed through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not in His own individual right as Divine and as perfect, but as a Priest in connection with others. Had He entered simply in His own right, He might have demanded entrance, saying, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in." But He entered by His own blood, for He passed through as a Priest.

Aaron, on the Great Day of Atonement, passed through the court and the holy place into the holiest with the basin of blood in his hands; that was the title on which he entered there—even the blood of that sin-offering. Aaron was taught that in that blood there was atonement for the sins of the people for the past year.

Now Christ also entered through blood into the true tabernacle; but what says the Holy Ghost of Him whom He delights to honour? "Neither by the blood of bulls and goats, but by His own blood." The blood of bulls was suited to the tabernacle "of this building," but such blood never could give title to worship in the tabernacle "not made with hands;" the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is required for that; and He Himself also, as High Priest, to carry it in. How constantly do we find that our highest blessings rest on the simplest truths. Our happy liberty of worship as saints, and our nearness unto God for ever hinge on the value before God of the blood of His Son. If we keep at a distance from God; if our consciences are unpurged in His presence; it is because we underrate the value of that blood, or forget what its once offering has accomplished.

It is not to be wondered at that men should be ready to turn back to sanctification by ordinances; the flesh would, as it were, naturally cling to any order of things which seemed in any wise to sanction and to sanctify it. A system for the purification of the flesh would be tenaciously retained by the flesh. But God has no such system now. He has tried man under it, and, his utter ruin having been there proved, He has for ever set the flesh aside. Its claims and efforts spring therefore from its ignorance of itself, and of God's ways

concerning it. God now has provided not for the flesh but for the conscience. He has no ordinance now by which the flesh may draw, in any degree, nigh; all these ordinances are gone for ever; but He has given His own Son to bring in eternal redemption, and to give present peace and confidence in His presence.

Hence God's grand object now is to glorify Jesus. He presents Him to us as the One in whom we shall find everything we need. And hence Christ must be all or nothing. He must be exalted and man abased; for if man is set up, Christ has died in vain. There is not only great power, but also great comprehensiveness in that word *once*. It shows us that the offering of Jesus *once*, comprised the fulfilment of all the typical sacrifices. Not only that His one sacrifice does this; but that the once offering of that one sacrifice did it. This is often forgotten, and hence many souls lack peace. They trust only the one sacrifice, and so have salvation; but they do not clearly see the effectual power its once offering had to "perfect for ever them that are sanctified," and so they have not peace. It is very humbling and very sorrowful that it should be so, because this is the especial testimony of God concerning that once-offered sacrifice; but so it is, nevertheless. Gradual declension in the Church opened the door for this practical unbelief, and bad teaching perpetuates it. But let the saints of God remember that as surely as there is but one Lamb of God, so surely that Lamb can be but once offered; and that that one sacrifice having been once offered, "*There remaineth no more offering for sin.*" Aaron, then, had to make many offerings; but Christ, by His once offering of Himself, has put away sin. He has consequently no more priestly work to do as the offerer of sacrifice for sin. To say that He has, is to say that He has the cross to go through again as the victim, and that He has again to enter into the holiest by His own blood. And this would instantly nullify God's testimony as to the preciousness of that blood, and the work it has already done; for, I again repeat, His testimony is not merely that that blood alone cleanses from sin, but that the once shedding of that blood has so entirely put away sin, that God now says to all that believe therein, "Your sins and iniquities I will remember no more." That the one and once-offered sacrifice of Christ did, because of the preciousness of His blood, fulfil all the typical sacrifices, is plainly

seen in verse 14 of this chapter; for we here have that blood set forth as the fulfilment, not only of the type of the blood offered on the Day of Atonement, but also as the fulfilment of the type of the red heifer. The law had its numberless forms of purification; by many modes and by many different acts did it prescribe for the purification of the flesh, all these combined to enhance the value of Christ's blood as once shed, and once carried in by Him to God. By that one shedding, and one presentation, we have had accomplished for our consciences for ever, what any or all the shadows effected for the flesh for a time. "If," says the Holy Ghost, "the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?" What a ransom, then, has Christ found! By that blood which He once shed on the cross, He has put away sin; that blood He has once—and once for all—carried into the true holiest. And must He repeat His work, as did Aaron, as though that blood had, after a little while, lost its efficacy? No. When He comes out again, it will not be to continue or repeat any work for sin, but unto salvation. He has found eternal redemption, and has entered into the presence of God as a consequence of His having done so. What a blessed alteration in the statute! What Aaron did every year for Israel, and yet never did effectually, Christ has done, once for all, for us. The saints of God, therefore, stand on the ground of accomplished purification. Just as truly as the ordinances of old did bring a people in the flesh into a certain kind of purification before God, so truly—yea, "much more" so—has that one sacrifice of Christ brought all who believe into the unspeakable and eternal blessing of having "no more conscience of sin." They may realize this, or they may not, but this is what Christ has obtained for them by His one offering. And just, therefore, as it would have been sinful unbelief for an Israelite of old who had touched a dead bone, to doubt that that uncleanness was gone when the ordinance of the sprinkled ashes had been observed by him, so is it **nothing** else than sinful unbelief for one of God's Israel now to doubt that all his sin and guilt has been for ever atoned for and put away by the once-offered sacrifice of Christ. Full faith in that sacrifice banishes

conscience of sin: God delights in having provided this for us. He would have us serve Him in freedom, not in bondage. He never took pleasure in any sacrifice for sin until one was offered which put away sin for ever, and gave to the consciences of His worshippers peace in His presence. In that holy presence, therefore, we stand realizing the everlasting results of Christ's Great Day of Atonement. The question of sin has been met by Him on our behalf—met and settled for ever; and, having put it away, he is now unto us the blessed minister of unmingled and eternal blessing. Christ's present position, and our present blessings, are thus alike the consequences of our sins having been purged. Can anything be more blessed than this, that we should, through faith, have already entered on our everlasting nearness to God, and are now privileged to know the peace proper to the heavenly sanctuary? The true tabernacle is free to us—as free now as it will be when we stand personally amidst its glories. We belong to that priestly family anointed for its holies; not limited to a holy place, nor serving before a veiled mercy-seat, nor having brief access into the holiest; but made meet for heaven itself, and worshipping with pure consciences in the immediate presence of God.

J. L. H.

#### LERWICK.

**T**HE half-yearly conference of Christians took place here on 2nd July, and we would like to ask our dear brethren in the south to remember in prayer the little assemblies which, in these islands, are gathered to **THE NAME**. We have had much blessing, albeit valued labourers, on whose presence we had counted, were hindered from being with us.

At our Bible-reading, two nights previously, a brother struck the key-note by reminding us of Jonathan and his armour-bearer; showing God's ability to save, to bless, or to give victory, through few as well as through many.

The meeting for prayer on the eve of the conference manifested a spirit of expectancy, which was again evident while we waited on the Lord, before going on to the more direct business of the day. In no way have we been disappointed, but, on the contrary, precious results in the way of encouragement, refreshing, and humbling, have followed.

"Prayer and supplication," songs of praise, questions to be answered, and searching ministry of the

Word, occupied what was felt on all hands to be a profitable time.

The evening's proceedings began with our having tea together in the Hall, which was well filled all day. Some had long distances to travel homeward after meetings were over, but the good time we had enjoyed helped to give more precious thoughts of—

“HOME! where the Brethren meet,  
And never, never part!”

Brother Sloan was with us; he expects shortly to resume his labours in the Faroe Islands. William Kennedy has gone up the country, where there seems

to be a willing ear to listen. Brother Rigg arrived after the conference, and projects evangelizing in Lerwick for a short time, if the Lord will.

Pray for these brethren, and the work in which they are respectively engaged. While remembering Faroe and Shetland, we would also bring the Orkneys before you—specially mentioning Kirkwall and St. Margaret's Hope. Pray that He “who taketh up the isles as a very little thing,” may send revival and awakening, and may “lengthen our cords, and strengthen our stakes”—as gatherings—in these places.

A. P. M.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to “prove all things,” and “hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender.

### QUESTION NO. XXVIII.

*In order that I may be “filled with the Spirit” (Eph. v. 18), am I to “ASK,” as in Luke xi. 13; or am I simply to know that there is an abundant supply, and RECEIVE?*

#### REPLY.

As to the words of our Lord Jesus referred to above (Luke xi. 13), it may suffice to refer to John vii. 39: “The Holy Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” The Lord Jesus, while upon earth, always spoke of the gift of the Holy Spirit as a blessing then future. See John xiv. 16; xv. 26; xvi. 7.

The Lord said, “I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever” (John xiv. 16).

Again, ere He left them He said, “And, behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke xxiv. 49).

And again, “But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you” (Acts i. 8).

From Acts i. 14 we learn that the disciples did tarry at Jerusalem, according to the word of the Lord, and “continued with one accord in prayer and supplication,” until Pentecost, when the Lord Jesus, “having been by the right hand of God exalted, and

having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit,” “shed forth,” or poured out, upon His disciples that wondrous gift, to obtain which it was expedient for them that the Lord Himself should go away. (John xvi. 7.)

Up till that time it cannot be doubted that it was the burden of the prayers of the disciples, that the Lord would speedily fulfil His promise, and send them the Comforter.

But after that we search in vain for any trace of a prayer either *for* or *to* the Holy Spirit.

And the reason of this is evident. How should believers be found praying for that Spirit who dwells within them, by whom they are sealed, who has made their very bodies His temple, and who is in their hearts the earnest of their inheritance, their teacher, their enlightener, their comforter, enabling them to cry, “Abba, Father,” and inditing with groanings that cannot be uttered their only acceptable prayers?

To pray for the Spirit already given is surely to deny the gift, and can only result from ignorance or unbelief.

But it is one thing to have the Holy Spirit dwelling within, and quite another to be “filled with the Spirit.”

It is only the empty who can be filled. When the temple of Solomon was dedicated, it is recorded not only that Jehovah made it His dwelling-place, but that “the priests could not stand to minister, by

reason of the cloud : for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God" (2 Chron. v. 14). It was wholly devoted to God, and therefore it was wholly filled by His presence !

So will it be with those who "yield themselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead" (Rom. vi. 13); who "present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable" (Romans xii. 1). The self-emptied will be God-filled. Alas ! how few are there in these days of worldly, luke-warm Christianity, who *really desire* to be filled with the fulness of God.

The word of the prophet to the widowed debtor was, "Go borrow thee vessels, empty vessels ; borrow not a few" (2 Kings iv. 3).

As long as there were empty vessels to fill, the oil continued to flow. When not another empty vessel was found, the oil ceased.

Such is the way of God. "He filleth the hungry with good things, but the rich He sendeth empty away" (Luke i. 53).

If there be a believing soul waiting upon God for comfort, for wisdom, for strength, for supply of any need, the Spirit of God is ever present to pour into the soul all the unsearchable riches of Christ.

But His indwelling is little realized, and His power little known ; because He is grieved by the indifference and unbelief of the children of God.

#### QUESTION No. XXIX.

*Is the solemn charge of 2 Tim. iv. 2 : "Preach the Word," binding on Evangelists in the present day ? Or is the practice at some Gospel Meetings of continuing to tell a number of stories equally Scriptural, and as likely to be used of God ?*

#### REPLY.

We have no hesitation in replying, that the apostolic charge above referred to is as binding now as ever it was, and even more needed than at any previous time.

But whilst answering thus, we would not contend that the "telling of a story," by which we understand the relating of an incident, or of many incidents, to illustrate the truth, is necessarily opposed to the exhortation to "preach the Word."

Those who know not God have "their understanding darkened" (Eph. iv. 18), and Satan holds in his power every one that "heareth the Word, and under-

standeth it not" (Matt. xiii. 19). So to "preach the Word" that it shall reach the understanding and the heart ought to be the great aim of the Evangelist.

Whether the illustrations of the truth be from the Scriptures or from experience, from nature or from providence, so long as they are kept in subservience to the one great object of bringing home the Word of God, they are helpful, and very frequently used by God.

The Bible is pre-eminently a book of incident and illustration. The prophets, speaking by the Spirit of God, pressed every department of nature into the service of the truth. The Lord Jesus used in like manner, and more fully than any other, illustrations borrowed from daily life and from creation, rendering thereby divinely simple the wondrous truths of redemption.

The lilies, the sparrows ; serpents and doves ; water and bread ; the ass in a pit ; the fall of the tower of Siloam ; the lost sheep ; the lost piece of money ; the lost son ; seed time and harvest ; baking and fishing ; building and husbandry ;—but it is needless to go further. To limit a preacher to the Words of Scripture is only to fetter the gift of God, and by tying him down to the language of Scripture, effectually preventing him from preaching after the Divine pattern and style.

On the other hand, there is a terrible danger into which many fall, and against which Evangelists do well to be on their guard.

It is the desire to entertain an audience rather than to reach their conscience ; to gather crowds rather than to gain souls for God ; to be a popular preacher rather than to be the Lord's messenger.

Let it never be forgotten that the illustration, whatever its character, is but as the chaff to the wheat, or as the feather to the arrow ; useful in its own place ; but it is the Word of God, and that alone, which is "living and effectual" (Heb. iv., literal), and shall not return unto Him void, but shall accomplish that which He pleases, and prosper in the thing whereto He has sent it (Isaiah lv. 11).

#### QUESTION No. XXX.

*If the formula used in Baptism in this dispensation be "in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," how does that agree with the type in*

*Rom. vi. 3, 4; Col. ii. 12; or the teaching in Gal. iii. 27, and 1 Cor. i. 13? Could the believer be buried with the Father and with the Holy Ghost by baptism into death; or could he be baptized into the Name of the Father or of the Holy Ghost, who was crucified for him?*

REPLY.

The writer of this question confounds the *authority for*, and the *result of*, baptism, with that which baptism symbolizes.

Baptism never did, and never can, signify anything else than death, burial, and resurrection; whether it be baptism "unto Moses" (1 Cor. x. 2), John's baptism (Matt. iii. 5), "the like figure," Noah passing through the flood (1 Peter iii. 21), Christian baptism as in Acts, &c., or baptism in a yet future dispensation; if, indeed, it be then practised at all, for which we know of no Scripture. Therefore the objection of the question as to being "buried with the Father," &c., would equally apply to every baptism mentioned in Scripture.

Whilst baptism symbolizes burial with Christ, it also shows forth our being risen with Him (Col. ii. 12); and as the children of Israel were baptized unto Moses, passing in a figure through death unto him as their leader and lawgiver; so the believer passes in baptism symbolically through the grave of Christ, coming forth from the waters as "risen with Him," there to learn the name of God in its fulness, never before thus revealed until the work of Christ had been accomplished.

He is baptized into the name of the Father, and is for ever owned a child; into the name of the Son, and is for ever identified with Him, not only in death, but also in resurrection; and into the name of the Holy Ghost, in whom he is baptized with all saints into one body (1 Cor. xii. 13), of which Christ is the Head, for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

QUESTION NO. XXXI.

*Is it right for a Believer to continue to live in a town with unbelievers, when he could obtain similar employment to his own in a town where there is a Meeting?*

REPLY.

This is a very important question, and has exercised many; but it cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or "no." And Christians should be most careful how

they judge concerning one whose actions may seem to answer "yes," unless they are fully acquainted with all the circumstances.

If the question has reference to one born in a town, and brought up in it, with ties of relationship, &c., it would be very different from one who went to such a place deliberately. In the first case, they would need to see clearly the Lord leading them *away from it*; in the other, they would need as clearly to see the Lord leading them *into it*. And the Scripture should guide.

If the person was able to preach the gospel, or able to teach, and had done so, and been blessed in it, he might clearly see his way to go; for in either case, blessing, resulting from the Word spoken, would lead to fellowship.

But if it were the case of one going for the mere sake of getting easier work, or increased wages, or even change of air—would it not show that they valued Christian fellowship in the Name of the Lord very lightly? And whilst, in the first case, we might see that one strengthened by the Lord to walk alone with Himself; in the other, we would most likely see growing worldliness, and coldness of heart, until the person was found to be no testimony for the Lord—and how often this has been the case!

Should not the question of Christian fellowship, and the privilege of remembering the Lord with his saints, be the first consideration, when seeking to arrive at a conclusion as to accepting an offer to go away from a place where it was enjoyed? Give the Lord and His Word their right place in your soul, and you will be guided. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy steps."

NOTICES.

SOUTHPORT.—Christians meet for "Breaking of Bread" at 29 Queen's Road.

NORTHWICH, CHESHIRE.—The Believers gathered to the Name of the Lord have removed their meetings from Church Street, to the New Mission Room, Castle Street. Meeting for Breaking Bread every Lord's-day at 10 45 A.M.

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# THE NORTHERN WITNESS

LONDON

JAMES E. HAWKINS,  
12 Paternoster Sq., E.C.,  
and 36 Baker Street, W.

OCTOBER,  
1880.

GLASGOW

PUBLISHING OFFICE,  
40 Sauchiehall Street.

## THE TRUE SPIRIT OF OBEDIENCE.

**I**N a letter in the July *Witness*, the writer says: "We may do a thousand things all right and scriptural in themselves, in the hope of getting much joy and blessing, but this is not the true spirit of obedience." How true! May not this lead us to ask, What is the "true spirit of obedience?" We reply, "Love;" for "love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. xiii. 10). Any act of obedience that is not prompted by love cannot please God. This we see clearly from Luke xvii. When the Lord Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem, "there met Him ten men that were lepers." Each one felt his disease, and need of healing. Their cry was the same, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us;" and all had faith, for we see all obeying the command given, "Go show yourselves unto the priests." "As they went they were cleansed." One of them was so filled with gratitude for the mercy received, he broke through the command given, and "turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God." Love prompted him to "fall down on his face at the feet of Jesus, giving Him thanks." "Jesus answering, said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?" They were walking in the path of faith and of obedience. Nine received the reward of faith, and of obedience. Only one the reward of love. The ingratitude of nine grieved the Lord Jesus; the love of one gave Him joy.

The walk of these ten men is a picture of the life of many of the Lord's servants. Many walk in obedience who seldom "walk in love" (Eph. v. 2). If we have grace to allow God to "search and know

us, to try us, and know our thoughts" (Ps. cxxxix. 23), will it not bring each of us to the dust? One may ask, Is it possible to walk in obedience without "walking in love?" Did not these nine lepers do so? Love knows no bound. Obedience does, for it cannot go beyond the command given. If we love we will surely obey. Look at a few of the many instances given in Scripture to prove this. The law never asked a person to devote all his means to the Lord. It was "holy, and just, and good," yet it was satisfied with a "tenth" of his possessions. Love led a woman to give "all the living that she had" to her God (Luke xxi. 1-4). The Lord Jesus did not ask any friend to anoint Him. Two women filled with love availed themselves of the privilege, which any of His servants might have taken advantage of, if they had the love. Joseph received no commandment to take that precious body down from the cross, and lay it "in his own new tomb." Love gave him energy to do so, when all the disciples had forsaken their Lord. To that cross "there came also Nicodemus (who at the first came to Jesus by night)." What joy it must have given his God to see him there manifesting his love when tried.

We have looked at cases of love and of obedience in the Word, shall we now bring the Word to bear upon our own lives? Christ "left us an example that we should follow His steps" (1 Peter ii. 21). "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also to walk even as He walked" (1 John ii. 6). Is it love to Him "who loved us, and gave Himself for us," that leads us to break bread "in remembrance of Him" week after week? Or, do we go to the

Lord's table merely because we have the command, "Do this?"

It is commanded "upon the first day of the week let every one of you [not only those who are rich, but "EVERY one of you]" lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him" (1 Cor. xvi. 2). Christian, Do you act on the rigid command, and give to the Lord "of His own" in the spirit of those who "robbed God" by offering unto Him the "lame and sick" (Mal. i. and iii.)? Or do you manifest the spirit of David who would not "offer unto the Lord his God that which cost him nothing" (2 Sam. xxiv. 24)? and of the Philippians who in "their deep poverty" contributed to the necessity of the apostle Paul "beyond their power" (2 Cor. viii. 2, 3), when "no other church" remembered Him?

How painful it is to hear many Christians say, "I do not see any harm" in spending my gold, time, or words in ways not expressly forbidden in Scripture. Surely their language will not be, "I see no harm in doing this or that;" but if they desire to "walk as He walked," "am I doing this heartily, as to the Lord?" He could say, "I do always those things that please my Father" (John viii. 29). May we have grace to "keep His commandments, and abide in His love; even as He kept His Father's commandments and abode in His love" (John xv. 10).

W.

## MINISTRY.

TO understand the subject of "Ministry," as it is exhibited in the New Testament, is no small degree of knowledge, for not only must it be connected with most important truths, and lead to most important results, but it must solve a problem which by many persons is considered nearly inexplicable. The different opinions that prevail on this subject are immediately apparent, if we take but a glance at the different practices prevalent in the numerous sects of professing Christianity in their "ministerial" arrangements.

What is then the general and popular idea of "ministry?" With the multitude it is a wide undefined term, meaning an office as undefined, held by a priest, a clergyman, a dissenting minister, or a Wesleyan preacher. With the uninstructed, "priesthood" and "ministry" are the same thing: the transition from the High Church clergyman to the Popish priest is not

by a very wide or difficult step; the difference is apparently still less between a clergyman and a dissenting minister; the title, garb, and office, differ but a little; and even the Ranters, and sects below the Ranters, have their "Reverends," with their clerical costume, and other littlenesses, which are "great to little men." Whoever then may take the trouble to institute the inquiry, will find that the popular idea of "Ministry" is like the popular idea of "Church"—all dimness and confusion. A notion prevails, that what ever the Bible has said about priests and Levites in the Old Testament, and about bishops and ministers in the New, is to be applied to the Christian Ministry; that a minister is a priest, and a priest a minister; that the person holding this office is in some way to be ordained to it by other priests or ministers; that, by virtue of this office, he is to preach and pray for the people, to visit the poor, to look after the salvation of men's souls, and more or less to secure it; that he is to be more pious than "the laity;" to wear official apparel; to be called "Reverend;" and generally to manage everything that belongs to "religion."

This is a popular idea of "ministry," and with very little variation it is the same both among Churchmen and Dissenters, as it obviously is not the interest of the clerical department in any sect to clear up the popular mistakes on a subject which, if rightly understood, might tend to a subversion of all established arrangements, and restore God's order over the ruins of the order of man.

The first and most obvious duty attached to ministry by all parties, is, and must be, *teaching*; except, indeed, in the Roman Catholic persuasion, where performing the sacrifice of the mass, and executing "the sacraments," takes precedence of preaching and teaching; but now we are talking of Protestants, and amongst them—in all their sects—teaching and preaching constitute, of necessity, a large portion of ministerial functions. Let us now see what the New Testament says of these functions, their origin, and the persons to whom they are assigned. We find all this stated in 1 Cor. xii, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant . . . (4) there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; (5) there are differences of administration, but the same Lord; (6) there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. (7) But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal;



(8) for to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom ; to another, the word of knowledge by the same Spirit ; (9) to another, faith by the same Spirit ; to another, the gifts of healing by the same Spirit ; (10) to another, the working of miracles ; to another, prophecy ; to another, discerning of spirits ; to another, divers kinds of tongues ; to another, the interpretation of tongues ; (11) but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will."

This statement is very clear ; we are here very plainly informed that the Holy Spirit gives many gifts to many members of the church ; that the donation is not to a privileged class, separated from their brethren, nor according to man's appointment or election, but that selection is made out of the whole body, according to the unrestrained will of the Sovereign Agent. "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man, to profit withal" (ver. 7) ; and that in consequence of this Divine regulation, one man receives wisdom, another knowledge, another faith (ver. 9) ; gifts surely requisite for any efficient ministry of teaching. There are, indeed, other gifts mentioned, but with them we are not now concerned, as the church confessedly does not now possess them ; but wisdom, knowledge, and faith must, in degree at least, exist, otherwise there would be no ministry of teaching at all. "Now all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will" (ver. 11).

If this be a true description of the church as it was at the first, then of course it bears no resemblance to the arrangements of the sects, where the division of ministry is not by the will and appointment of the Spirit, but by the direction and choice of man. This is indeed so plain, that almost all commentators seem quietly to yield the point, that ministry in the Corinthian Church was of an order now lost, and that all known existing churches have adopted another method. They speak of the Corinthian order as a pattern known only in the Scriptures ; it is, in fact, *terra incognita* to them, and so accustomed are they to the systems introduced by tradition, that the distribution of gift by the Spirit, to every man in the church, they consider some strange phenomenon of the days of miracles. Amongst the sects we do indeed see quite another order ; in the Churches of Rome and England, the bishops appoint to the ministry ; in the Kirk of Scotland, the Presbytery is the fountain of clerical functions ;

amongst the Dissenters, the people, or the church, as it is called, *elect* the minister, and other ministers ordain him after he has been elected ; and, amongst the Wesleyans, the Conference, or some power deputed by the Conference, names and governs all the ministers and preachers. Now, it must be clear to every one, that bishops, popular elections, Presbytery, or Conference, are not the Holy Spirit ; and beyond this, one need not push the inquiry, in order to be satisfied that all sects, from the stately Church of England, down to the lowest denomination of Dissent, are gone far astray from the order recorded in the New Testament. If the Scriptures, then, are to be our guide, we have already advanced far in the solution of the problem before us ; and we have only to apply the statements in the New Testament to facts before our eyes, to assure us of the accuracy of our deductions. For instance, let us try the existing Church of Rome, by Paul's description of the Church of Rome. Paul, in writing to the Romans, says : "We, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another, for we have different gifts—and there are amongst us prophets, ministers, teachers, exhorters, rulers, helps, shewers of mercy, and others" (chap. xii). But now all that can be said of the Church of Rome is, that it is entirely clerical ; that the Spirit does not appoint to ministry, and that everything there is under the supreme control of the Pope. The Church of Rome, therefore, has lost the order set forth in the Scriptures ; and so it is with others also ; for we do not find it written, "He gave some bishops to rule dioceses—or he gave rectors and curates for the ruling of parishes—or he gave ordained ministers," &c. This is not stated, but something dissimilar in every respect. Protestants, therefore, as well as the Church of Rome, have departed from the Word of God in their arrangements of ministry.

Again : supposing, for argument's sake, that such a form of the church did exist, as has been described in the twelfth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians—that there was no "ordained" ministry, no clerical or official appointments, no clergymen or "ministers" consecrated or chosen to act as functionaries for the people, but that all the people, without any recognition of official distinction, met as a gathering of the saints, to receive any "diversity of gifts" which the Spirit might raise up amongst them ; that "wisdom," "knowledge," "faith," were exhibited here and there,

without man's direction, and wholly independent of it, and that the saints so gathered had no idea of any other order; would not such a church resemble a body in active and vigorous life; every limb, every member, contributing, in proper proportion, to the life and activity of the whole body? Now, this is exactly the similitude selected by the apostle Paul, to describe the church of the Corinthians. "The body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him *And if they were all one member*, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you. . . . Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (1 Cor. xii).

But let us ask, how can this portion of Scripture apply to the Church of England or other Protestant denominations? In those divisions of professing Christendom there is no *body* at all, if we are to follow the apostle's illustrations of the life and visibility of the church manifested in the acknowledged life of all the members. The apostle plainly tells us, that "if they were all one member there would be no body;" and who is there that does not see in these words a condemnation of the clerical system, which presents the body in the form of one member only—THE MINISTER, the ordained, official, and salaried minister, who, whether he be appointed to his office by a prelate or a popular election, supersedes all spiritual gift in the church? In such a system as that, the saints are reduced to silence, the body is dead, all the members inanimate, the "honourable" or "feeble" are alike useless, and one individual is eye, mouth, ear, hand, foot. "The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of thee." This is the illustration of the apostle; but applying this illustration to the customs of the sects, we see that with them "one member says, I will be eye, hand, head, and foot. Entrust all your functions to me, ye separate members, for I will be the life of the whole body." This is a figurative description of *the*

*fact*, presented to us by the ministry of the one-man system, and in such a system the supremacy of the Spirit cannot be owned, nor can His distribution of gift "to every man according to His will" have any place. Everything that the apostle says on that subject is inapplicable to a church government based on an ordained ministry.

It is just possible that a person to whom these truths were new, might seek to evade the force of them by contending that "life" may be and is in the members of a Protestant church, as it is ordinarily constituted, and that no one can be a believer without this life, which is a gift of the Holy Spirit, and recognised as such by the evidences of saving faith. It is not, however, of that life that the apostle is speaking in this chapter; he does indeed lay down as a fundamental truth, that "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost" (ver. 3); but taking that as an acknowledged first principle in the church, and presuming that every believer does call Jesus Lord by the Holy Ghost, he goes on to show how, in addition to that spiritual life of the regenerate, there is given to them another power, for the purpose of manifesting their corporate energy, which power is the distribution of gifts for ministry by the Holy Ghost: where there is that distribution, or at any rate where it is acknowledged, then he says, every member is in proper place, and then it is that one member does not usurp the functions of all the rest.

In the fourteenth chapter of the same epistle, Paul incidentally lets us know the result of the church order, as it existed in the days of obedience. (Ver. 23), "If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad? (24) But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all. (26) How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, *every one of you* hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. (27) If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. . . . (29) Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. (30) If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. (31) *For ye may all prophesy one by one*, that all

may learn, and all may be comforted."

The meaning of this passage is evident: Paul supposes it to be possible that in the meetings of the churches *all* the believers might be so injudicious as to use one gift which would be intelligible only to themselves, but wholly unintelligible to the "unlearned or unbelievers" (ver. 23). This possible mistake he corrects by recommending that only two or three should speak in an unknown tongue (27), but at the same time he mentions, with manifest approbation, the possible fact of *all* prophesying (ver. 24), nay, he plainly says, that "all might prophesy one by one, that all might learn, and all be comforted" (ver. 31); and whilst he says this, he never alludes to the existence of any official pastor, ordained minister or clergyman in the Corinthian church; his thoughts never go that way at all; he does not, as is the custom now, address his remarks as a matter of course, to "the minister," meaning thereby either the parish priest or the popularly-elected preacher, but he obviously directs his precepts to the whole Corinthian church, as the ministering body. He expects that gifts should be visible in *the body*, the gifts of knowledge, wisdom, faith, teaching, help, government, evangelizing, and the rest; and he expects that the appointment to those gifts must be by the Holy Spirit, that same Spirit by which, as he tells us in introducing the subject, every believer has been enabled to say that Jesus is the Lord (1 Cor. xii. 3). And, indeed, it is well worthy of observation that Paul, in writing to the Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians, Galatians, Thessalonians, Philippians, and Colossians, never directs his letters to "the minister," he never even names such an individual; and this fact alone, if duly weighed, would go far to settle the question of an "ordained ministry," wherever there is a disposition implicitly to believe and obey the Word of God.

In concluding the precepts concerning church order to the Corinthians, Paul says, "Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto **THEM** to speak" (xiv. 34). Now, it would have been impossible for Paul to have written this sentence if he had been acquainted with the phenomenon of a regular ordained ministry; for taking his words either as they stand by themselves, or in connection with the preceding matter, it is quite apparent that he supposes all the men in the Corinthian church *might* speak if they had received the gift; not that it was incumbent on them all so to do, but that any one was permitted if he had

the gift. Women were the precluded class: *there* the line was drawn. Silence is enjoined to them, and to them only, and this most abundantly proves that the whole church, with the exception of the women, was deemed in those days to be in a capacity "to teach all and to comfort all." B.

## EXODUS.

**E**XODUS signifies "going out," or "departure." "Redemption" and "relationship" characterise this Book. It covers a period of about 145 years, and may be divided into two principal parts, chaps. i. to xv. 21; chaps. xv. 22. to xl. The life of Moses is divided into three forties:—forty years in Egypt, forty years in the backside of the desert, and forty years with the children of Israel in their wanderings through the wilderness. Moses is a beautiful type of the Lord Jesus Christ as the great "Deliverer" of His people as well as Prophet to His people.

Chaps. i. and ii., give us the history of Israel in a strange land, but multiplying greatly under persecution: type of the Church oppressed by the world (John xv. 18-22). Moses born; type of Christ as "Deliverer" (Deut. xviii. 15; John v. 46; Luke iv. 16-19; Matt. i. 21). Pharaoh: type of Satan's power to destroy the woman's seed and God's elect (Gen. iv. 8; xxxvii. 18; 2 Chron. xxii; Matt. ii; Matt. xxvii). Verses 12, 13, of chap. ii., illustrative of fleshly zeal independent of God—a mistake. Moses rejected by his brethren: type of Christ rejected by His own people after the flesh (see John i. 10, 11, the "world," mankind at large; "His own" the Jew). Moses, like Joseph, during his rejection by his brethren marries a Gentile: type of Christ and the Church His bride. "Zipporah" figuring forth the Church *now* a stranger here (1 Peter ii. 11; 1 John iii. 1); "Asenath" (Gen. xli. 45), the Church united and sharing with Christ in His exaltation and glory, future (John. xvii. 22, 23; Col. iii. 4).

Chap. iii.—The burning bush: type of "Israel," the "Church" and the "remnant" preserved and unhurt by the fire of persecution (Isaiah xliii. 1, 2). Chap. ii., verses 12, 13; we see zeal without knowledge; here in verse 11, the want of zeal and faith; fruit of the old Adam nature which is ever too hasty or too slow in service for God.

Chap. iv.—Moses sent to the people with signs: type of Christ (John ii. 11; iv. 54). Verse 2, type of Christ's death victorious over the power of the devil, the old serpent (John iii. 15). Verses 6, 7, type of sin and sin cleansed (Matt. viii. 2, 3).

Chaps. v. vi.—Pharaoh: type of Satan, rejection of God and His messengers; hence trial and affliction increased (2 Thess. i. 5, 6). Israel complain against Moses and Aaron, and Moses and Aaron against God—fruit of unbelief. Israel in these two chapters present to us the sad condition of every child of Adam, "sold under sin," "led captive by Satan at his will," "without strength," "without hope;" and the power of deliverance in Jehovah *alone* (Isaiah xlv. 21, 22; Acts iv. 12). See His covenant *established* and *remembered* (verses 4, 5; Isaiah xlv. 25).

Chap. vii.—Jannes and Jambres attempting to imitate Moses: type of the professor without the power—counterfeited resemblance—Satan in the form of an angel of light (2 Tim. iii. 1-9). The water turned into blood (Rev. xvi. 3, 4). One of the first miracles of Moses was turning water into blood; one of the first miracles of Christ was turning water into wine: illustrative of "law" and "grace."

Chap. viii.—Moses refuses to worship and sacrifice in Egypt. Nothing short of "three days' journey:" type of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, which separates the believer from the world and the world's temple and idol worship (2 Cor. vi. 14-17).

Chaps. ix., x., xi., and xii.—The judgments fall more heavily, and end in the death of the first-born in the land of Egypt.

Chap. xii.—The lamb slain, and the passover instituted: typical of Christ, "the Lamb of God," the sinner's Substitute dying in the sinner's stead and place (John i. 29; 1 Pet. i. 19; 1 Cor. v. 7). Verse 7, typical of the blood of Christ, the only ground of peace and security (Col. i. 20). The lamb killed was food to the Israelites (John vi. 55). "Roast with fire:" typical of Christ subject to the action of the fire of Divine judgment and holiness. "Bitter herbs:" typical of Christ suffering for us; and the fellowship of His sufferings experienced by us (Rom. vi. 6; 1 Pet. iv. 1). Verse 11, type of the Christian and the Church, a pilgrim and stranger here. Verse 13, the blood for a token (Josh. ii. 12; Psalm lxxxvi. 17). Death of the first-born;

judgment and death *outside* (verse 29); salvation and security *inside* (verse 23). *In* Christ, life and peace; *outside* Christ, judgment and death (John iii. 18).

Chap. xiii.—The first-born sanctified: typical of Christ (Rom. xii. 1). No leavened bread to be eaten (see also verses 6, 7): illustrative of separation, devotedness, and holiness of the believer, and decided separation from evil doctrine and practice (1 Cor. v. 7). Verse 13, man put on a level with the unclean beast, "thou shalt redeem with a lamb." Christ is the Lamb or Kid which redeems and ransoms the unclean sinner. Verse 21, the cloud to "lead," the pillar of fire to "light:" type of Christ (John x. 4, 5; John viii. 12), the Word (Psa. cxix. 105), and the Holy Ghost (John xvi. 13, 14; 2 Cor. iv. 6).

Chap. xiv.—Passage through the "Red Sea:" type of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus and His people in Him (Rom. iv. 23-25; Rom. vi. 3-11; Col. ii. 12-15; iii. 3).

Chap. xv., to verse 21.—The triumph and song of Moses and Israel, grounded on accomplished redemption; a typical song (Rev. xv. 3), in which the Church of Christ can join on account of their redemption and deliverance by God (Rev. i. 6). Verse 21, "The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea:" typical of the final ruin of all impenitent sinners (Rev. xx. 13, 14); also of "sin" and "sins" "condemned," "blotted out," "covered," "forgiven," sins and iniquities "remembered no more." Thus it is the believer in Jesus *knows he is eternally saved* (Isa. xxxviii. 17; Psalm ciii. 12).

"Oh love! thou bottomless abyss!  
My sins are swallowed up in thee,  
Covered is my unrighteousness,  
Nor spot of guilt remains on me;  
While Jesus' blood through earth and skies,  
Mercy, free, boundless mercy, cries!"

MORALITY is only nature refined—old Adam put in a better dress. The adorning of man with moral excellencies is like garlanding a dead body with flowers.

CONSEQUENCES BELONG TO GOD.—What an oppressive burden is taken off a Christian's shoulders, by his privilege of leaving all consequences, while in the path of duty, to God! He has done with—"How shall I bear this trouble?"—"How shall I remove this difficulty?"—"How shall I get through this deep water?"—but leaves himself in the hands of God.

## FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER AND THE SON.

"The SON of MAN is come to SEEK and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix. 10).

"The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the FATHER SEEKETH such to worship Him" (John iv. 23).

**N**OT long since a Christian said to another, "I like to think I am called to have fellowship with the Father and the Son, and would not like to go to any place where I could not have both." "Both!" one may say, "could he have the one without the other? Are not Father, Son, and Spirit, one, and do they not act together?" Undoubtedly; yet we find such a difference as this taught, that whilst Jesus was on earth, the Holy Spirit was not yet given (John xii. 39), and yet in one sense He was everywhere. Again, that whilst the Holy Spirit, though grieved and quenched, abides in us for ever (John xiv. 16, 17), yet the abiding of the Father and the Son is conditional; and so in the two passages given above, it is "the Son of Man" who is seen seeking the lost, and the Father who is seeking worshippers. And although the three parts of the one parable of Luke xv., as do other Scriptures, show that Son, Spirit, and Father respectively, are joined together in this wondrous work; yet it in nowise alters what has been said. Thus when we are seeking the lost, we are more especially having fellowship with the Son; and when we are seeking worshippers, we are having fellowship with the Father. The remarks that follow, therefore, are based on these distinctions.

Turning to Luke xv. referred to, we see the Lord Jesus in that wondrous love that many waters could not quench, finding—because seeking for—lost, ruined, and helpless sinners. And should we not, as saved, enter into the heart of the Lord Jesus, in some measure at least; for none can doubt that His infinite love will ever far surpass ours, and long with intense earnestness for the salvation of souls? Do we know the fifteenth of Luke? How often read! How familiar the letter of it to us; but oh, how cold our hearts! Where is that persistent love shown out in the tracking of the lost sheep; where the diligent love in searching on till sinners be saved out from the defilement of a lost world; or where the abounding love to run to welcome the returning prodigal? Oh to get closer to our Lord, to know more the deep longing desire He has for

souls, and the joy that bursts forth from His lips as He welcomes to Himself the believing one!

Thus may we have fellowship with the Son.

And now, reader, turn to another Scripture, and then ask yourself, "Have I fellowship with the Father also?" "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship Him in spirit and in truth: for the FATHER SEEKETH SUCH to worship Him." Have we fellowship with the Father in this? How satisfied many a one is when they see a soul saved. To hear them speak one would think they had nothing more to desire for such. They may say, "Now, seek to live for the Lord, and work for Him—be earnest;" but they never think that when this is the case their fellowship is one-sided. "I am ONLY an evangelist," says one; meaning thereby to excuse himself from the responsibility of teaching that new-made disciple "to observe all things" (Matt. xxviii. 20). Thus baptism is set aside, and all that follows, and no cross is theirs for teaching that which perhaps would seem to lessen their influence; for "seem" it could only be, as we remember His words, "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it" (Rev. iii. 8); yet they have lost the fellowship with the Father in this wonderful "seeking." Shall we magnify the one at the expense of the other? God forbid. The Son is seeking;—precious privilege then to go down for Him into the hovels of this world, seeking out degraded ones and winning them to Him by telling of His love unto death—the death of the cross.

But the Father is seeking worshippers. Then equally precious is the opportunity to go to the saved ones whom the Son has sought, and tell them the Father is seeking their worship—worship in spirit and in truth.

But do not all saved ones worship? Can it be said that they all worship in *spirit* and truth? "In spirit:" to do this, it is evident they must be in communion; then sin will be judged, and separated from; for without this they might kneel alone, or be found with the gathered ones to the Name of the Lord, and yet their professed worship could be only a form, and so long as sin was between could not be "in spirit." But the Father *seeks* such; and should not we?

Listen! "Ye which are SPIRITUAL restore such an one" (Gal. vi. 1). Then worship in SPIRIT can ascend to Him afresh, and rejoice His heart. Does one say, "I am spiritual?" Then let him thus have fellowship with the Father.

An Old Testament illustration may help us. The sad history of Lot after he separated from Abram is familiar to us. His successive steps, as he got further into the world, have often been traced. But one sad result of his going down to Sodom was, that when the king of Shinar (that is Babylon) with other kings came against the king of Sodom, Lot was taken captive. Being in Sodom, results even now in being taken captive by Babylon; and thus some who were once separated to the Lord, having become worldly, have then been taken captive by the religious world. They could no longer be found in a place of rejection. The happy circle of God's gathered ones, because disowned and cast out by the world, no longer satisfied them, and they joined a sect. But what did Abram do when he heard it? He, as the "spiritual" one, saw his opportunity to SEEK to restore such an one to the *place* where worship could ascend with acceptance, and with his trained or instructed (see margin) servants, sallied forth and rescued Lot. But Lot remained in Sodom, sad to say. We are sure that Abram would have had him out of it if he could. And as with Abram, so should it be with us. "Of some have compassion, making a difference, and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire" (Jude 22. 23).

But the Father seeks worshippers in TRUTH, as well as in spirit. "The spirit is everything," says one. It matters not where we go. "The form of worship, or church government, may differ, but all bodies own Jesus as the one Head;" and thus, by tradition, the Word of God is made of none effect. Let His Word speak to us, for it has not only forewarned us of all the evil of the last days, but it has anticipated these foolish sayings of men. In closing the chapters relating to "worship in truth" as saints are gathered to His name, Paul writes, "But if any man think himself a prophet, or SPIRITUAL, let him acknowledge that the things I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. xiv. 37). Thus the sign of SPIRITUALITY will be reverence for the Word of God, as to the one only Name in which Christians should gather (1 Cor. i.); the holiness that becomes His house (1 Cor. v.); the way in which the Lord's Supper should be observed (1 Cor. xi.); and the ministry (1 Cor. xii.); the love in which it should be carried on (1 Cor. xiii.); and the ordering of it according to the Spirit of God (1 Cor. xiv.)

How often have young Christians been told not to

think of baptism. It is not essential, they are told, and they listen. Go on with simple Gospel things, or you'll become cold. One said to me lately, "I don't occupy my mind with these things. I do long to be in earnest about souls." Most conscientious I believe she was; but oh how ill informed. How dishonouring to God and His Word, thus to speak. Opening my Bible, I pointed her to Acts viii., Philip baptizing the Eunuch; to Acts x., Peter commanding the centurion and others to be baptized; Acts xvi., Paul and Silas with the jailer. And I asked her if they were less in earnest than she for the salvation of souls, for *they* occupied themselves with baptism. The Word could not but *silence* her; and if not *convinced*, it was because tradition was as a coat of mail to prevent the sword of the Spirit piercing, and *manifesting*. And then, evidently to her amazement, I added, "We rejoice in souls being saved, and we equally rejoice when Christians are saved out from the religious sects around, and led by the Lord Himself to own His one Name, His one Body, and His one and only way of gathering together for worship." Then one standing by, added, "Yes, and so do I; and if anything more, when Christians are led into the truth; for," said he, "whilst the fifteenth of Luke clearly shows the joy there is over the returning prodigal, John says, 'I have no GREATER JOY than to hear that my children walk in truth' (3 John 4). 'FOR I REJOICED GREATLY when the brethren came and testified of *the truth* that is in thee, even as thou walkest in THE TRUTH' (3 John 3)!"

R. T. H.

WE do not yet know the Gospel if we put anything between Christ and the sinner—between faith and salvation.

PRIDE—Humiliation is the spirit of our dispensation—not a creeping, servile, canting humility; but an entire self-renunciation. Pride is the most universal and inveterate of all vices. Every man is a proud man, though all are not equally proud. No sin harasses the Christian so much, nor accompanies him so unweariedly. Its forms of exhibiting itself are infinitely varied, and none is more common than the affectation of humility. The assumption of the garb of humility in all its shades, is generally but an expression of a proud mind. Pride is the master-sin of the spirit; and the grace of God, in the whole tenor of our dispensation, is directed against it.

## A HIGH PRIEST OF GOOD THINGS TO COME *(Concluded).*

**A**ND do we prize as we should this blessing of a purged conscience? Do we discern the peculiar grace marking its bestowment? It was entirely unknown to worshippers under the law; not only unknown to the congregation who worshipped without, but equally so to the priests who served within. That first tabernacle must ever have been a house of bondage to conscience. Conscience can never be purged by what fails to bring nigh unto God. As long as full reconciliation was not known—as long as sin was found more effectual to exclude from God, than sacrifice for sin was to bring nigh to God, so long conscience could have known no purification. And not only people, but priests, yea, not only priests, but even high priests must have had sin, not salvation, brought to remembrance by their constantly recurring sacrifices. Expiation—full and entire expiation—there was not; for had there been, the demand for expiation would have ceased. This thought must have continually forced itself on all worshipping under the shadows; and in proportion as conscience was tender and exercised, so would it be sensible of its unpurgedness. Such might fully understand that the flesh was purified for admission into that tabernacle by the appointed blood of bulls and of goats, while at the same time their consciences might be carrying a load of guilt, for which, in such blood, they found no remedy. But now it is not merely the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. A purged conscience is, therefore, the distinctive blessing of the saints in this dispensation. A saint who has it not has forgotten, or (it may be through carelessness) has lost what became his, when, by faith, he passed beneath the blood-sprinkled lintel. No more conscience of sin is one of the very first good things bestowed on us by our blessed High Priest; for if that be not maintained, God well knows that we cannot worship Him in spirit and in truth. It is the everlasting efficacy of Christ's own blood, once carried in by Himself unto God, which secures this. All we need in order to its constant enjoyment is simple faith in that presented blood. But though all we need, in order to a purged conscience, is simple faith in what Christ's blood has effected, we are to exercise ourselves to maintain a conscience void of

offence towards God and towards man; and the saint of God, who, walking in the Spirit, seeks to maintain this good conscience, will be the most sensible of his many defects and failures, and so will most realize the blessedness of the purged conscience provided for him by the blood of Jesus. Such a saint will be quick of sense to detect defilement, he will feel a soil that others are insensible to. Everything around us is tainted with death. Nature itself is defiled. The very charities of life have power to defile and deaden the soul. And to all this, the Holy Ghost, who dwelleth in us, seeks to make us sensitive. If, therefore, there was not this ever effective provision for purgedness of conscience, the saint walking most in the Spirit would be bowing his head like a bulrush, and in terror before God, because conscious of so many defilements; though to others all would appear so fair and so devoted. Blessed indeed, therefore, to such is the High Priest of good things to come. Blessed lessons, both concerning holiness and concerning sin, does His work for them enable them to learn; for all that they are learning of the purity of God, and of the more subtle and refined deceitfulness of their own hearts, only serves to prove to them the value of that blood by which they are redeemed and sanctified unto God. These are lessons of which the careless or unexercised soul is ignorant. Let it be remembered, therefore, that every type of cleansing finds its fulfilment in the death and resurrection of Christ. It is not the work of the Spirit to purify, but to testify to the blood of Christ as purifying. The Holy Ghost comes to the saints as the witness of their cleansing, not as the producer of it. That Christ has already and for ever effected that, is the burden of the Spirit's testimony to conscience; in this the Holy Ghost delights to declare the honour of Jesus. Just, therefore, as we simply believe His testimony, will our consciences be really purged. I would add that it is not to the great and blessed doctrines of election or the like, or to the unfailingness of God's purposes, that the Holy Ghost specifically points the conscience in order to its purging, but expressly to God's estimate of the blood of Christ. For other precious purposes He does discourse to the saints on those blessed doctrines; but for the especial purpose of giving and maintaining a purged conscience, He invariably directs the soul to that blood, as provided by God's infinite love for that very end.

The present portion, therefore, of the saint is to be

ever in the true tabernacle, and to be there with a purged conscience. He is never an outside worshipper, nor an uncleaned one. Man's best efforts at worship only keep him at a distance from the living God: ordinances, however precious in their place, have the like tendency, just as they are used to bring nigh. This accounts for the ceaseless and restless labour of those who trust to them; for they heap burdens on conscience in the vain effort to relieve it, and entangle themselves but the more in the trammels from which they struggle to be free. It is the blood of Christ alone which frees from every fetter, and gives, at the same moment, liberty and an everlasting home in the happy presence of God. Here, then, we have two marvellous blessings connected with the priesthood of Christ: the first, access into the true holies, and abiding there as our ordinary place of worship; the other, perpetual purification of conscience through the blood of Jesus, ever on the mercy-seat itself. It is on these two established privileges of the household of faith that our worship depends. But there are other of the good things to come, made present to us through the priesthood of Jesus, mentioned in this chapter. For example: We have a house of worship everlastingly purified. Atonement was made of old for the holy sanctuary, and for the tabernacle of the congregation, as well as for the priests; and we are here told that as it was necessary that those patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with the then appointed sacrifices, so was it necessary that the heavenly things themselves should be purified with better sacrifices than those; "for Christ is not entered into the holies made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Now it is His having gone to appear for us there, which has rendered this purification of the heavenlies necessary. God is not only jealous of His own personal holiness, and so provides for the personal cleanness of those whom He brings into His presence; but He is also jealous of the purity of heaven, His dwelling-place; and hence, heaven also is purified by blood, that the entrance of sinners into it may in no wise defile it. And it greatly assures the priestly worshippers to find that they themselves are purified by that same blood, which thus preserves the purity of God's own dwelling-place and throne. One purification avails for all—God's throne, God's temple, God's high priest, and God's priests. For can we really think of heaven

itself being our proper place of worship, without fearing that we may carry defilement into it? Do we not feel that we should tarnish and soil those pure and heavenly courts? Well, God has met this fear too: the true holies cannot be defiled, for they have been purified for ever by the blood of Jesus. Thus has God prepared us for His presence, and His presence for us. All is done. Every plea that unbelief can put forth, for shrinking into the darkness which it loves, is disposed of for ever by this all-effectual blood! "Having therefore, brethren, liberty to enter into the holies by the blood of Jesus; by a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh; and having a High Priest over the house of God; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

J. L. H.

#### THE CAUSES AND COURSE OF PETER'S FALL *(Concluded)*.

SIXTH.—"They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not" (John xviii. 25).

Every time a Christian by faith resists the devil until he flees from him, he becomes stronger and stronger; but every time he yields to temptation, he becomes weaker and weaker. Some one has said, "He may be very slow to yield the first time, and Satan may also be very slow to assail him after he first yields, for fear of alarming him too much, but he comes none the less prepared, and determined to have his victim of that." His assaults on Peter do not appear to be so rapid at the beginning as at the end. Having identified himself with the open enemies of Jesus, and twice openly denied him, step by step, now a confirmed backslider, he reached the climax of his awfully sinful condition.

In open sin, perhaps a worse man than ever before—ay, even before he heard of Jesus—before he left his boats and nets at His call to follow Him, in order to learn the more honourable calling of fishing for men! Gone from bad to worse, liker "the wicked one" than ever before, next to reprobate, and in the eyes of men quite fit for being doomed eternally—next door to hell, having added to the last an old besetting sin (as some suppose), namely, that of cursing and



swearing. Quite a natural supposition; as we have known some who fell from high profession go back to their old companions in sin, and enter into all their old sinful practices with redoubled energy. When a man has once slipped fairly away from the Lord, who can tell how far he may go into sin? "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Seventh.—"One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him? Peter then denied again, and immediately the cock crew" (John xviii. 26, 27); but in Matt. xxvi. 74, we read, "Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man." (See also Mark xiv. 71.) What a contrast between those words of Peter in John vi. 69, when the Lord put him to the test, "We believe, and are sure, that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God," and Matt. xxvi. 74, when put to the test the third time by Satan—"cursing and swearing," he said, "I know not the man"!

"O the glory of the grace" that could still pity, spare, pardon and reclaim a poor backslider in such a state as this! Why were his lips not immediatly sealed in death, with those awful imprecations, whatever they were, to remain for ever upon his tongue? O, matchless mercy! O, boundless love! Instead of the thunderbolt from a darkened heaven, behold the flood-gates of that ever-flowing, over-flowing Fountain of infinite love immediately opened, and the greatest pity, and the strongest compassion, flowing out towards him in that melting look of love from the "Man of Sorrows!"

Peter heard, and remembered—heard the crowing of the cock, according to the Lord's prediction, that before it should crow twice he would thrice deny Him. And when Christ's loving look drew Peter's eye toward His, he remembered His faithful words of warning—"went out, and wept bitterly."

Must poor backsliders, sunk again to the lowest depths in sin, be reclaimed just as poor sinners are saved? The sinner is awakened to hear the law, consider his condition, remember his doom; then he is led to look to Christ, whose loving heart and pitying eye have been following him through all his wanderings on "the broad road which leadeth down to destruction"—and he repents, believes, and is saved! That true, God-given, God-wrought, repentance—which implies not only a change of mind, but also a change of heart,

and is followed by a change of life. All who have thus repented know that to be a "repentance not to be repented of." We do not mean that belief which we have sometimes heard of, which merely implies a "taking God at His Word," and nothing more—but that true heart-belief, which not only credits God's Word, but trusts God's Son at the same time—that belief which secures that salvation which delivers from the love of sin, and from the power of sin, as well as from wrath and from hell. "Believe on"—not the Word of God merely—but "on the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house," was the Gospel answer to the penitent question long ago, and who will dare to improve upon God's patent?

The poor backslider is again awakened to hear and remember the faithful word of warning and of love, to consider his miserable condition, to think of the past to dread the future—to look again to Christ, whose loving heart and pitying eye has been following him through all his wanderings and failures in the wilderness—and thus he repents, or turns, or is converted; that is, turned from a state of backsliding (see Luke xxii. 32), and is reclaimed or restored.

But many backsliders are allowed to sleep and wander on in their sins, until they die in the dark! "Saved! yet so as by fire" (1 Cor. iii. 15), just like a man snatched from a burning building, escaping with bare life, but losing everything else. (Compare also 1 Cor. v. 5, with 1 Peter iv. 18.) Who would be so presumptuous as to dally with sin, as a Christian—and we do not mean one in name merely, but in deed and in truth, "one with Christ," "born again"—and run the risk of being saved like that at the end? Should this fall into the hands of any poor backslider, or any poor sinner yet unsaved, I pray God, through Christ Jesus, that they may here and now look to Him—"Look and live."

"Though you've wandered for away,  
Look and live, look and live;  
Harden not your hearts to-day—  
Look and live!"

"Look! the Lord is lifted high;  
Look to Him, He's ever nigh;  
Look and live—why will ye die!  
Look and live!"

Peter looked to Jesus while Jesus looked on Peter; and, O! that look of love, that soft pitiful look was the reflex of that great loving heart, which spoke, even then, pardon to that guilty one. That piercing love-look from the "man of sorrows" at Pilate's bar, went

deep down into Peter's soul—melting his hardened heart, subduing his stubborn will, softening and toning down that impulsive, restless, rebel nature, which was like those restless, rebellious, uncontrollable waves on “deep Galilee,” that none could quiet and control “save Jesus only.” One word from Him, and they were calm and still. One look from Him, and Peter was melted into bitter weeping, even while the hell-storm was raging in his bosom. And as the clods of a ploughed-up field—through alternate frost, rain and sunshine—are pulverized, and prepared for the precious seed of the husbandman, so his heart was now prepared for those precious words which he afterwards heard from a risen Lord, whereby Peter was established, strengthened, settled in faith, in hope, and in love, ever after.

Dear believer in the Lord Jesus Christ! Having thus gone over what we consider the causes and courses of the seven steps in Peter's fall, which teach many profitable lessons, let us seek to lay them to heart, for we too are beset with infirmity, therefore liable to fall. “Let us, therefore, fear.” Keep ever “looking unto Jesus.” Study closely, prayerfully, carefully, “the Word of the living God.” Obey every precept as well as believe every promise. “Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.” And while we adore the Lord Jesus Christ for having “saved us with an everlasting salvation,” and praise Him for that grace whereby He wrought in the heart of a fallen Peter such genuine repentance, let you and me daily trust Him for that sustaining grace, by which alone we can “adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.”

“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ.” And “unto Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy: to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.”

J. M.

Is it not strange that many talk of keeping God's commandments and never remember that this is *the* commandment of God, that we should BELIEVE in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ.

## PRINCIPLES OF REALIZED BLESSING.

2 CHRON. v. 6-14.

**T**HERE are three great principles of realized blessing and of manifested glory.

First, all our spiritual blessings for time and for eternity are founded on atonement.

Verse 6: Solomon, and those “that were assembled unto him before the ark, sacrificed sheep and oxen, which could not be told nor numbered for multitude.” As though all were too few and small to show forth the inestimable value of the sacrifice of Christ which those offerings foreshadowed! Indeed, its priceless value is beyond all human estimate. No mind but the mind of God, no heart but the heart of the eternal Father, will ever be able to fathom its boundless depths, and reach its wondrous heights. Hence, too, we begin each fresh portion of time, in imitation of the Spirit-taught disciples, by meeting together on the first day of the week in remembrance of it, and of Him that offered it.

The second principle is, giving the Lord Jesus His own proper place—central and pre-eminent—“Jesus in the midst.”

Verse 7: “The priests brought in the ark of the covenant unto His place.” In time and in eternity, the place which the Father gives to the Son is the centre. In the bosom of the Father, as the centre of Divine affections; in the midst of the throne, as the centre of universal empire; and in the midst of the Church, as His proper and rightful place on earth. In the midst of the Church universal, as walking in the midst of the seven golden lampstands; and in the midst of the assembly of disciples gathered to His name. Not *in* His name merely, but *TO* or *UNTO* His name; that is, to His person.

When the Lordship of Christ is owned, every question is easily settled as to the Church and its discipline; and when the Lordship of Christ is recognized and submitted to in the assembly, the blessing is unbounded. When none lifts hand or foot without Him. Not only not acting *contrary* to His will, but not acting *without* His will. None daring to give out a hymn, read a chapter, speak or pray, without having first caught His eye, and obtained direction or permission from Him.

Now that the Lord Jesus is away, the Holy Ghost is not setting up a democracy, but maintaining the

Lordship of Christ, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Him. Some seem to act as if they thought that having got rid of the "one man ministry," every one is at liberty to do what is right in his own eyes. Hence the spiritual poverty and misery of many assemblies. Better be under the tyranny of one man than of a million. As a remedy for all this, let the Ark be brought into his place. Let the Lordship of Jesus be owned. "Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown HIM LORD of all."

The third principle is, harmony and fellowship in the Spirit.

Verse 13: "As the trumpeters and the singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking Jehovah . . . then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of Jehovah." Thus was it also at Pentecost. A solemn responsibility rests on those who profess to lead the worship of God's saints, that no chord of discord should be struck, but that all should be harmony and unity; that every word should be so distinctly uttered that all may hear, and that no sentence should be spoken but such as all might have fellowship with. Where there is unity in the Spirit the glory comes in, and there is no room for the flesh; but where the flesh has its place the glory is shut out, and the Spirit is quenched. Then the more fleshly are the more prominent.

The first principle is represented by Calvary, where the Sacrifice was offered to God. The second by the mount of Olives, whence the Son ascended to the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on high. The third is Pentecost, when the Spirit descended to baptize into one body the members of the risen and exalted Lord, and to form them into an holy habitation for God, and for the manifestation of His glory.

T. N.

## SECTARIANISM.

"DENOMINATION" is only a veil for that harsher word, "sect," though even that is a softened translation of the original. "Denomination" is a specious word invented by shame to conceal the nakedness of the fall of Christendom. That which erring and bewildered Christians call *denomination*, is in the Scriptures, SCHISM; for so it is in the word, "I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing,

that there be no *schisms* [see the Greek] among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. i. 10, and xii. 25); for, in the Scriptures, believers are represented not only as being one body and one spirit, but as having a perfect unity of mind and judgment, so that whatever we may now hear concerning "denominations" (that is, sects and schisms), and however these divisions may now be applauded and admired, and however much it may have become a fashionable virtue to speak well of them all, yet this is certain, that if there be any truth in the Word of God, every sect is a sin, and every division a proof of disobedience. THERE IS ONE BODY, is a truth in the Word of God (Eph. iv. 4). The faith once delivered to the saints was mainly to establish this fact; the whole of the New Testament tends to confirm it; and visible Christianity utterly fails to represent the true Christian faith where this fact is not, both in practice and in theory, fully acknowledged. I can, at present, only allude to this subject in passing, for it is of itself a theme for a wide and serious inquiry; but so much is here said on it, lest any believer, rightly instructed in the Word of truth, should be offended with the usage of a word which was originally invented to hide sin. To speak of "various denominations," is, after all, but saying that there are various schisms; for Christ and His Church have but one name (1 Cor. xii. 12), one body (Eph. v. 29, 30), and one spirit (1 Cor. vi. 17); and, therefore, to give Christ the name of Roman Catholic, Churchman, Presbyterian, Independent, Baptist, Wesleyan, Walkerite, Sandemanian, Quaker, or Ranter, and to admire this many-headed portent as His body, the Church, is as intolerable as to call our Lord by the names of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva; or to look for the body of His disciples amongst the sects of Athenian philosophy. It is one thing to love all God's children though entangled in sects, and another to avoid the meshes of their captivity. The oneness of thought, mind, and action, required of the Church of God may be seen in the following texts:—John xiii. 34, 35; xvii. 23; Acts iv. 32; Acts xx. 29, 30; Rom. xii. 16; xv. 5, 6; xvi. 17; 1 Cor. i. 10; xii. 25; 2 Cor. xiii. 11; Gal. i. 9; Eph. iv. 14; Phil. ii. 2, 3; iii. 16, 17; 1 Thess. v. 13; 2 Thess. iii. 6; 1 Tim. i. 3-6; vi. 3, 20; 2 Tim. iv. 3, 4; 2 John 9.

B.

"BOAST not thyself of to-morrow."

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

**NOTE.**—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to “prove all things,” and “hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender.

### QUESTION NO. XXXII.

*Is it right for one who takes part in meetings of those gathered to the Name of the Lord Jesus to give and take strong drink in connection with matters of business, or in any public way?*

#### REPLY.

A very clear and definite principle, which affords guidance in such a case as the above, is laid down in Rom. xiv. 13-23.

Whatever be my own faith, my own liberty, and the enlightenment of my own conscience, I am at the same time always to take into consideration the effect my conduct will produce upon others.

I, with my knowledge may, with good conscience, do that which to another, with less intelligence, appears to be evil. “Let not your good be evil spoken of.” My liberty may prove a stumbling-block to my weak brother. In such a case, “It is good neither to eat meat, nor to drink wine, *nor anything* whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.”

“He that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men.” The great thing is to **SERVE CHRIST**. “Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

The habit of associating the giving and taking of strong drink with lawful business is the ruin of so many, and leads to so much that is sinful, and to so many evil associations, we fail to see how upon any ground whatever it can be practised as “serving Christ.”

### QUESTION NO. XXXIII.

*Should a Christian be a member of a “Trades’ Union” or take any part in a “Strike?”*

#### REPLY.

We approach a question such as this, which so seriously affects so many of God’s dear children, with the utmost tenderness; but we must not shrink from declaring the mind of the Lord concerning it, however painful and difficult the path of obedience may be.

The principle at the root of the Trades’ Union is, a

*mutual agreement whereby one is bound by and committed to the action of another.*

A Christian in a ‘Trades’ Union not only suffers through the action of the Union (others not in the Union may also suffer in consequence of the course adopted), but he is committed to act as the Union acts, thus manifestly being “unequally yoked together with unbelievers.”

He, as an individual, may respect his master, and be fairly contented with his wages. He also, as an individual, might be willing in times of low wages to work a little harder, or longer hours, in order that those dependent on him might want for nothing.

He may desire as the Lord’s servant so to act. But he is in “the Union,” and therefore voluntarily subject to a despotism of the most absolute description, which prevents him from acting independently before God. He is voluntarily yoked to those whose counsels are not even in pretence guided by the Word of God, and is dragged by them into a course from which his own conscience revolts.

But it is said, “If we do not join the Union then it is simply impossible to obtain employment.”

Does it not seem as if already the dark shadow of the coming dominion of the Man of Sin were setting in upon the world? In whose day none shall be able to buy or to sell “save he that hath the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name” (Rev. xiii. 17).

What does that mean? Simply that the authority of the Lord is denied, and the authority of “the beast” is submitted to.

And if one says, “I must disobey the Lord in order to obtain employment;” is it not the same thing in principle as receiving the mark of the beast in order to buy and sell?

We have known of some who acted in obedience to the Lord and lost their employment, but who immediately had their path opened up by a faithful God, to employment where they could work with a good conscience.

We have known others who disobeyed the Lord in order to obtain employment, brought to misery and starvation through "A STRIKE."

Whether is it better to suffer in fellowship with God, and to have the testimony of a good conscience, or to suffer in company with the children of disobedience, with an evil conscience, and out of communion with God?

Read Psalm xxxvii. 1-4; lxxxii. 10; 16; lxxxiv. 11, 12.

#### QUESTION NO. XXXIV.

*Please explain 1 Cor. iii. 17, "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy."*

#### REPLY.

The first four chapters of this epistle have chiefly reference to the introduction of human wisdom along with the truth of God in the building up of the Church. The apostle had laid the foundation—Jesus Christ. He, in his preaching, laid the same foundation that God had laid in the death and resurrection of His Son. He determined to know nothing among them save "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

His object was that their faith and hope might be in God, and not in the wisdom of man. Others followed the apostle as instructors of the saints, building up by further ministry the Corinthian Church.

But instead of adhering to "the wisdom of God," and to "the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth"—thus adding to the foundation truth taught by the apostle, gold, silver, and precious stones—they had introduced human wisdom, false principles, which, like "wood, hay, and stubble," must sooner or later prove their unfitness for a place in the temple of God.

The warning of the verse above quoted is especially for those who are builders up of the Church of God. The word rendered "defile," is the same that is afterwards rendered "destroy." Alford gives more accurately the sense, "If any man *marreth* the temple of God, him shall God *mar*."

Just as the pattern of the tabernacle in the wilderness was given by God to Moses, and the pattern of the temple to David, so the mind of God concerning the Church, His present and only dwelling place on earth, was committed especially to the apostle Paul.

To have used materials in the construction of the

tabernacle or the temple not prescribed by God, would have been to mar the structure, to render it unfit to be Jehovah's dwelling place, and to incur the divine judgment.

Such was the sin of those who, even in Paul's day, had begun to introduce "the wisdom of this world." And ever since, false teaching has done its fatal work, and marred the fair fabric of the temple of God. The result is seen in apostate Christendom on every side.

But, it may be asked, if this warning apply specially to builders or to teachers in the Church, in what sense does God mar or destroy those who, through false teaching, have marred His temple?

And first, let it be understood that "him shall God mar, or destroy," does not necessarily imply final perdition.

It might be fulfilled (*a*) in the builder being deprived of his reward, (compare 1 Cor. iii. 14, 15, with Col. ii. 18 and 8); (*b*) in his being delivered unto Satan, (compare 1 Tim. i. 19-20; Gal. v. 8-10; and 1 Cor. v. 5); (*c*) by the direct judgment of the Lord, as in 1 Cor. xi. 30-32; or (*d*), if an unsaved man, a mere professed believer, by final perdition: (see Jude 12, 13; 2 Peter ii. 1-3).

If the solemnity of the responsibility of teachers among the Lord's people were more fully understood, there would be more care as to what is taught, and fewer to undertake so responsible a work.

"My brethren, be not many teachers, knowing that we (teachers) shall receive the greater condemnation" (James iii. 1).

We read of two "looks" in Scripture—one saving, the other destroying. The bitten Israelite looked at the brazen serpent, and was healed. Lot's wife looked back on the cities of the plain, and was turned into a pillar of salt.

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LONDON

JAMES E. HAWKINS,  
12 Paternoster Sq., E.C.,  
and 36 Baker Street, W.

NOVEMBER,  
1880.

GLASGOW

PUBLISHING OFFICE,  
40 Sauchiehall Street.

## WORSHIP.

### NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.

2 Chron. v. 12-14; Daniel ix. 20, &c.

**G**OD is the author of peace, not of confusion." The most marked characteristics in the creation of God are variety in unity, and unity in variety. There is not absolute unity, or absolute variety, but a mixture of both. Lift up your eyes to the heavens and behold; you see no square stars, they are all round; but they are not all single, some are double; nor are they all moving at the same velocity; nor are all of the same magnitude; nor are all of the same degree of brightness; nor are all at the same distance from the earth.

In this lower world, too, there is infinite variety among the creatures which God has made; yet there is unity, and particularly in the higher creatures is there something in which all are alike. This is a shadow of the Creator Himself, in whom is trinity in unity, and unity in trinity—three Persons, quite distinct, yet one God.

So it was originally in the moral world as well as in the material, the material world being the image of the moral. But sin came into this world, and separated unity from variety, and produced, not difference merely, but discord—not a variety of harmonious notes, but one universal jar and chaos of sounds.

Now it is the design of redemption to restore, not variety, but unity, which is very dear to the heart of God, as you see everywhere throughout Scripture, and particularly in the last prayer of our blessed Lord;

and you see it even more distinctly in that remarkable passage, Eph. iv. 3-6: "One Spirit, one body, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all;" therefore, strive "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

As to social prayer, there is a special blessing pronounced on harmony. "If two of you shall agree," or as it is in the Greek, "if two of you shall *symphonize*," make moral harmony, not monotony, but harmony, like different instruments blending sweetly together. I do not know a passage where the power of harmony on the heart and mind of God is so beautifully illustrated as in 2 Chron. v. 12-14. Let us look at it. Solomon's temple was built with immense labour and cost. There was not a stone or ornament lacking. Multitudes of sacrifices were offered; every piece of sacred furniture was in its place; all the priests and choristers in white were at their posts; but one thing was wanting to make this immense preparation of the slightest value. There was the palace, but where was the king? There was the gorgeous throne, but it was empty. By what means was the king to be induced to take his seat? You find the answer in the words I have read, 2 Chron. v. 13. Why this stress laid on unity? "When the trumpeters and singers were *as one*, to make *one* sound," &c. It does not mean monotony, because there was a variety of instruments—psalteries, harps, cymbals, and voices, all making harmony together. There is great force in this expression, "*were as one*." Then the king entered in a cloud, and filled the house. Has this no lesson for us? "Does God take care

for oxen?" Is He "moved with concord of sweet sounds?" Sees He with our eyes, or hears He with our ears? Multitudes of worshippers think they please God when they please themselves. They are pleased with "solemn temples," dim religious lights, and artistic choirs; a band of music makes their hearts rejoice, and they think that God is in sympathy with it. "God is a spirit." He sees no spectacle, hears no sound. Does God look at a steeple? He dwells in the high and holy place. "Where is the house that ye will build for me, and where is the place of my rest?" "To *this* MAN will I look" (not to the steeple, the singing, or the music), but "to *this man* who is of a humble and contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word."

But in keeping with that dispensation, in which things external and visible were types of the internal and invisible, the outward harmony was designed to represent inward harmony—mental, and particularly moral concord; that religious concord of which Christ speaks, when He says, "if any of you shall *symphonize*," like singing first and second, but no discord.

Observe here what is particularly striking: it was unity and harmony that brought the King into the palace that Solomon built. But God does not now dwell in temples made with hands—the saints are His temple. What brings Him into the spiritual temple? Moral harmony. Oh! He hates discord, just as you who have an ear for music cannot bear a jarring sound. It is miserable to stand beside a man who does not know one note from another. So is moral discord infinitely more displeasing to God, who delights, on the contrary, in harmonious worship.

For a New Testament verification of this, see Acts iv. 23, &c. The apostles had been persecuted by the Jews, and being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said. "Then they lifted up their voice with *one accord*." They were all agreed about what they said, and about the motive that made them speak. They were not going to take the law into their own hands, that would be out of harmony with themselves and with God. "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken." There came the cloud, only it was not seen; there was manifest power; the unseen, but most real presence of the living God, in answer to harmonious prayer.

Is God changed? Does He love harmony less than

in days of yore? With Him there is neither variable-ness nor shadow of turning. But man has changed; and it is because of the lack of harmony in worship that there is so little display of Divine power, and so feeble a manifestation of the Divine presence. Contrast the 4th of Ephesians with the actual state of Christendom. Instead of *one* faith, there are many faiths. Instead of *one* body, you have five hundred bodies. Instead of *one* baptism, you have I do not know how many baptisms. There is not unity in variety, but *absolute discord*. The King is not attracted. There are multitudes of even real Christians (I will not speak merely of Christendom as an aggregate, of nations calling themselves Christian—but I speak of true Christians), and among them there is *not* one spirit and one body, &c. You have three, four—I do not know what number of "bodies"—and God's ear is pained by this horrid jar—and I do not doubt that the Holy Ghost is universally grieved by it; so that numerous conversions are comparatively feeble, even when they are true. Christians, in fact, are badly born; they are rickety children, that need propping up to make them stand. The Spirit is grieved, and the preaching in consequence is feeble, supplemented, alas! by sensational phenomena and *addenda*. The Word of God is not sufficient; there must be ornamental additions, like the gilding of ram's horns. What is the consequence? That when people are made Christians, the supplement has a good deal to do with the manufacture. If converted, they are not strong, healthy, vigorous children. They have not got good back bone, and sturdy limbs on which to stand without a prop. That is a matter of fact to which many can testify. And in worship, Oh! what a lack of power, because of the lack of unity and harmony.

Well, is there no remedy? Thank God—if there is a universal church, there are also particular churches, just as there are particular families in the human race. Every particular family is responsible for itself, and not for the whole of mankind. So churches, which are spiritual families, are not answerable for the universal church, though they are affected by its condition, as individual families are affected by the condition of the entire nation. But, nevertheless, every family is responsible to God for the order of the house, and so it is with individual churches. This is rendered more difficult now, because of the grieving of the Spirit and



the corruption which prevails: yet it is not impossible to form a well-ordered human family or a well-ordered church.

God has promised His presence to the smallest family—to “two;” and you cannot have a family with less than two. “Where two or three are gathered in my name, *there am I.*” The King comes in even to a small family like that, for mere numbers are no attraction to Him.

In addition to that, if there is symphony in the prayer of two, it shall be done. Therefore, in the general discord and wretchedness which prevails, as it is the duty of families, so it is of churches, to look to themselves. Every particular church is a house of God, a family of God; and there is no family well ordered without rule; nor can there be rule without rulers. Neither should there be a church without authority somewhere, that is, without some to exercise authority.

Moreover, not only is God attracted by harmony, but He is most ready to answer the genuine prayers of saints collectively or individually. Just look at Daniel ix. Daniel makes confession. He is thoroughly honest and sincere. And while he is yet speaking the angel Gabriel is sent to tell him that his prayer is heard. Does not that show that God is ready to answer prayer? We think if God keeps us waiting for years He has forgotten His promise. Is God changed? Is not this to be verified now? If not, there is a screw loose somewhere. He can make no mistake—He must be right. There must be a lack of honesty, uprightness, self-denial, or faith; or in the case of bodies of Christians, there must be internal discord.

How is it as to Christendom! In the Church of England prayers have been offered for the royal family for 300 years, that they might all be “endued with heavenly grace, and finally after this life obtain everlasting joy and felicity.” Will any one pretend that these prayers in every generation have been answered? Is God unfaithful to His promise? The fact is, they are no prayers. You may pray for this, that, and the other by human prescription, and yet God not hear a word you say.

In this nineteenth century, in these last days, notwithstanding ten thousand prayers for “the high court of parliament,” an avowed atheist has been sent to legislate for the Church and State. How is it that

the prayers are not answered? Because they are not prayers.

Among Dissenters in general prayers for the conversion of the world have ascended from pulpits and missionary platforms, and promises have been made to assembled crowds that the nations will, by means of missionary labours, be brought to beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks. Well, where is this halcyon scene? Look at the iron-clads, and the hundred-ton guns, the torpedoes, &c. Thank God for this book—“the word of prophecy.” It is for want of “giving heed to it” that the prayers of Dissenters have been out of harmony with truth and with the mind of God. Instead of the world being converted, it seems as though the church was becoming unconverted. There is less interest in this nation in the Gospel of Christ than there was forty or fifty years ago; that is, there are fewer people in comparison of the increase of the population and of accommodation, attending places of worship than there were forty years ago. Oh! these are perilous times; and I would not like to bring up a young family now. It is true you can do anything by the grace of God, but disobedience to parents is one of the chief marks of the last days, and who does not see that plague-spot spreading and deepening now?

A particular church, then, a house of God and family of God, may learn from the passages I have endeavoured to expound how to attract the King, how to allure Him into their midst, and how to retain His presence. He loves unity and harmony, and hates discord. We cannot have unity with all Christians. There are what are called “united prayer meetings,” but for the most part they are only a show and a sham, for when the prayer meeting is over the harmony is over. The “united” worshippers will not notice one another in the streets. That is a pretence. There must be *reality* if we are to attract the King, that He may fill His throne and house.

May God keep His house among us, and may He come into it and fill it with His glory; and may all feel the manifestation of His presence, and the display of His power.

A. A. R.

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It is the hand of the potter that forms the “earthen vessel,” and fits it for service; but it is the furnace that frees it from its earthy taste,

### SATAN'S WAYS WITH PETER THE SAME AS WITH THE LORD.

**S**ATAN is ever the same. To-day he may roar against the child of God, and to-morrow his roaring may cease, but his efforts to turn aside, to drag down, to render useless in the service of Christ have not ceased. Is he no longer a lion roaring against you? then doubly be on your guard; for, depend upon it, he will seek to get over you as an angel of light. His purpose is one. He never swerves from it. He seeks to devour.

Thank God that Satan does *not know* everything, *can not do* everything. But whilst you do this, be sure that you do not make light of him, that you do not forget he has had nearly 6000 years in which to gain experience of man, and that he has spiritual wickednesses around you all ready to act at his command, and an evil nature within you only too willing to listen to his wily suggestions, and ready to turn your feet aside.

Such thoughts as these arose whilst pondering over the ways of Satan with the Lord Himself and with Peter.

Ere the Lord went forth to deliver captive ones, He had to meet the one who held them captive. This He did in the wilderness. All seemed against Him.

Note the striking contrast between Gen. iii. and Matt. iv. In the one, a garden with all that could be desired; in the other, a wilderness yielding nothing. In the one, beasts under the entire control of man; in the other, *wild* beasts (Mark i. 12). In the one, man with all for his use; in the other, the Lord hungry after forty days and forty nights of fasting. Satan comes. His temptations are subtle. Just **THE** ones for the place and the circumstances. He is hungry, then make bread out of stones. What harm? Was He not Divine? But the Lord discerns. He whose ear morning by morning was awakened to hear as the learned, has His heart alive to the temptation. Is He hungry? Is He in a wilderness? Yes, all true; but He need not—He will not give up the place He had voluntarily taken, that one of dependence upon God. With one verse (Matt. iv. 4) He defeats him.

But Satan, although defeated, renews the attack yet from another quarter. Was his first temptation a **PERSONAL** one, as to the wants of the hungry One? the second is a **SPIRITUAL** one. Quickly too did he learn. The Lord had silenced him with Scripture,

then he will quote Scripture, or at least a part of it. And never is Satan more dangerous than when he approaches us with Scripture. Then surely, if at any time, we need to be on our guard. From a pinnacle of the temple he speaks to Him the second time: "If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down, for it is written, 'He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee, and in their hands shall they bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone.'" How cleverly he left out a bit, just the bit that would have answered himself: "To keep Thee in all Thy ways" (see Psalm xci. 11). And would that have been the way for the Lord Jesus? Not so. But again the crushing answer comes, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Did He need to tempt? Never. Did He not afterwards say, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels" (Matt. xxvi. 53). And had He not the same confidence then? Yea, verily. Whom do *we* tempt, try, or test? only one we suspect. Is a shilling marked and put in the till? then it is to test a suspected one, for it is not done to all. Is a letter made up and posted by a post-office official? then it is to try one whose honesty is suspected, for it is not done in the case of every letter-carrier. Did Israel say, "We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land," etc., after the Lord had told them to go up, and that He would *bring* them in? Then unbelief sent, and unbelief brought word back, except as Joshua and Caleb witnessed for the Lord. And unbelief led to forty years of wandering in the wilderness—result of suspecting and tempting God. Not so the Lord when the hour came, that "the Scripture might be fulfilled," He did not call for angels, He suffered all. Therefore had He come. But ere that hour when man sought His life, He found Psalm xci. 11, 12, true to Him, and "passed through their midst" (see Luke iv., and John x.)

But Satan's efforts were not exhausted. Again he seeks to destroy. From a high mountain he shows the Lord the kingdoms of this world. All were to become His. But first the cross, and resulting from it, the suffering and the glory that should follow. This was God's way. Blessed fruit of His toil, it was to be His through death. Did not Satan know this? and now in his last venture, with one desperate effort, he appears in his true colours as the adversary of the Lord. Before that he had, so to speak, hidden himself,

but now as the Prince of this world he speaks: "All these things will I give Thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me," that is, as god of this world. In a moment the Lord says, "Get thee hence, Satan." Notice, these were the first words He spoke as from Himself, and in them there is no parleying, no room for reply. "Get thee hence." "AWAY." And He clenches it with another word of Old Testament Scripture, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." What an example! The perfect One, the Son of God Himself, thus meets Satan; and shall we dare to meet him otherwise? God forbid. Let us seek to know him in his wiles and deceptions, and when we do, let there be no hesitancy, but may we resist him, then only will he flee from us.

Thus Satan was driven off. But he only sought another opportunity, and watched for it. At last it came. Peter had confessed Jesus to be the Son of God, and had been told that he was blessed, and that the Father had revealed it unto him. Then the Lord, in connection with that first intimation of the Church being built on the rock, told the disciples "how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and SUFFER many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be raised again the third day." And then was Satan's opportunity to renew his temptation; but this time he will employ the lips of a disciple. "Then Peter took Him, and rebuked Him, saying, 'Be it far from Thee, Lord, this shall not be unto Thee.'" Avoid the suffering! But He turned, and said unto Peter, "Get thee behind Me, Satan. What! Satan? Yes. A disciple's lip, but Satan's voice, and the Lord discerned it. How sad, just as a noble confession of Christ had passed his lips, result of the Father's revelation in his soul, those very lips are pressed into service by Satan. How blessed for Abram to be able to rescue Lot from the enemy. How sad that an old prophet of Bethel should so speak, that one, hitherto faithful, should be turned aside; and thus it is still. Only can we, dear children of God, avoid this by keeping near the Lord. Does he open our lips to give out God's truth? Let us see Satan does not open them the next moment to turn aside some saint thereby. Can he not succeed with the Lord? then he will try the disciple. Has he been foiled as personally he tempted, and again as he spoke through Peter? then he will turn all his forces upon Peter himself.

He could not get the Lord to give up His dependence

upon God; he will try Peter, and see if he will. And too well did he succeed, for surely he had given it up, and was strong in self-confidence, when he got him to say, "Though all men deny Thee, yet will not I;" and then, in spite of the Lord's warning, succeeded in getting him to repeat it again and yet again. Had he failed in causing the Lord to test God? he would try Peter. It was not one of Messiah's ways to throw Himself from the pinnacle of the temple, therefore He would not take it; for He could not—would not test One He knew. But soon Satan succeeds with Peter, for let *dependence* be given up, and boasting comes in in its place, and soon the saint will find himself *where* he should not be. Thus it was with Peter. Whilst others held back, Peter rushed in, and soon stood with the world, warming himself at the world's fire, thinking, alas, more of his cold body than of his cold heart! For, remember, though he stood where Christ's eye could and did afterwards look upon him, yet he was not by his Master's side, but away from Him, and when Christ was suffering Peter was denying. And soon Satan spoke through the maid's lips, seeking to turn Peter aside still further. For, had he failed to turn the feet of the blessed Lord who had set His face as flint, from the path of *suffering*? then he will try Peter. And alas, again and again Peter is heard denying the Lord. Thus *suffering* was avoided, but at what a cost: "he went out and wept BITTERLY" (Matt. xxvii. 25). Oh, the bitterness of that hour! who can fathom it? "He went out;" ah, he could not remain under the look of that eye, a look of tenderest compassion, yet of loving rebuke, that surely must have raised in his heart the thought, "*He* told me of this, and I would not believe Him, and now it has come." But love followed him, and now he stood alone with the Lord (1 Cor. xv. 5) and was restored, and then before all (John xx.) was restored and commissioned by the risen Lord as the Great Shepherd of the sheep to feed His sheep. And thus, as in grace, the Lord had taken a *rebuked* Peter (Matt. xvi. 23) up the mount, there to behold His excellent glory (Matt. xvii.), now He commissions a *restored* Peter to strengthen his brethren. What grace this is! How excellent are His ways, *past* finding out! Did one recline on His bosom? that one the Holy Ghost will use through whom to write of love. Did Paul sit at Gamaliel's feet, and there drink in of law? then blinded, and yet enlightened by a glory that excelled all the

glory that shone from a lawgiver's face (2 Cor. iii.)? he shall be the one to show in fullest detail the contrast between law and grace, and to take away the first that the second might be established (Heb. x. 19). And so was it with Peter. Had he sinned, and that so grievously? Had he given up the place of dependence; tested the Lord; and avoided suffering? He shall, as a restored one, from out of his own deep bitter experience, warn fellow-saints. And how full his epistles are of such warnings and exhortations. "Pass the time of your sojourning here in FEAR" (1 Peter i. 17); "FEAR GOD" (1 Peter ii. 17). Is not that as much as to say, *Depend* on Him? "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God *commit* the keeping of their souls to Him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator" (1 Peter iv. 19). Where then would there be ground for *testing* Him? "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also SUFFERED for us, an example that YE SHOULD FOLLOW HIS STEPS" (1 Peter ii. 21). Then, surely, we never could turn aside from SUFFERING, as Peter did. And what will follow? Bitterness? Listen—"But and if ye SUFFER for righteousness' sake, HAPPY are ye, for the Spirit of GLORY and of God resteth upon you" (1 Peter iv. 14). Then he adds a word of warning: "Be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled" (1 Peter iv. 14). Had he not been afraid when he acted in self-confidence? but, restored, he had nobly stood before it all. Did he in one court deny the Lord as a little maid spoke? then when he was on trial himself he would speak out, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye, for we CANNOT but speak" (Acts iv. 19, 20). And thus, by example and precept, he strengthened his brethren. And all down the ages since have Christians been stirred, and encouraged to suffer by the precious word of such an one as a restored Peter, who seems so often to allude in his exhortations to his own failure and its cause, as in his 2nd Epistle i. 10, where he writes, "If ye do these things YE shall never fall." "I fell! but I was not adding virtue or 'courage' to faith, but 'self-confidence.'"

Dear believer, let all this speak to us, if in unbelief we test our God, or turn aside from the path to *avoid suffering*, is it not the result of leaving the one only true and safe place for every child of God, in Peter's day, our day, and every day, the place of ENTIRE DEPENDENCE upon the Lord Himself, which may be summed up in one word: "We walk by FAITH, and not by SIGHT!"

R. T. H.

### "THOUGH HE SLAY ME."

SEEMETH to me my stroke is sore,  
Seemeth to me that o'er and o'er

I have fathomed what mental pain can teach,  
And the deepest that bodily suffering may reach  
I have learned; till the dew from each strained pore  
Told the agony throbbing from innermost core;  
How then was it needed, this sorrow more?

Heart be still  
God's will  
Is ever the best for thee.

Go bid the foaming waves be still,  
Bid the lawless winds obey thy will;  
But tell me not content to be  
When away, away on a desolate sea  
Has drifted all that was life to me,  
And of love and trust all my heart has known,  
And weak, and weary, and all alone,  
I am cast on the shore; while with mocking tone  
The Tempter sneers  
At my groanings and tears:  
"Is this how thy Father cares for thee?"

Ah! bethink thee, my soul, how thy Father did prove  
His ageless, measureless, infinite love,  
When He gave up His Only-Begotten—His Own—  
For thy sins of crimson dye to atone,  
To suffer thy doom on Golgotha's tree,  
That He might pardon a rebel like thee—  
That the Hell of fire thou might'st never see,  
But with Him in the glory eternally be;  
And is it not so  
That *this* God doth know,  
And send, whatever is best for thee?

And, Jesus, my Lord, can I ever forget  
How, when mine iniquities on Thee were met,  
All the billows of wrath did over Thee roll  
Till the waters came in to Thy very soul?  
And the utmost pain that my spirit can know  
Seems light while I gaze on Thine infinite woe;  
'Neath that awful shadow full well I trove  
In that dark hour  
Of Satan's power  
Still strong and true was Thy love to me.

Yea, Thou art Love, Thyself, my God!  
And humbly I'd bow me beneath the rod;  
Thou hast borne with my murmurings vain and wild,  
And hushed me to rest like a weaned child.  
Seemeth to me (tho' my heart is sore)  
In this dreary place I have gathered more  
Of cause to wonder, and love, and adore,  
Than e'er I had learnt on a sunnier shore:

And my soul is still,  
I bend to Thy will,  
I know that Thy way has been best for me.

A. P. M.

## WILLINGNESS TO OBEY.

"If any man will *do* His will, he shall know of the doctrine"  
(John vii. 17).

**I**F we were more simple, and willing to be led by the Word of God only, how many of our difficulties as to what is the teaching of His Word would be removed. Speaking with a Christian the other day, he said to me, "When learned men so differ, how can we who are not learned, and who do not know the original languages, know what and who is right?" My answer was, "We have as distinct a promise to rest on in the Word of God, that we shall be led aright, if we are truly desiring to *do* God's will, as we have regarding the salvation of our souls." Now let us try and learn a lesson from the book of Nehemiah. Ezra, Nehemiah, and the writings of those prophets who prophesied in connection with the returned remnant, should have a special interest for us, who have sought in the present day to come back to the place first occupied by the Church of God. The portion we will look at together is the eighth chapter of Nehemiah: "And all the people gathered themselves together as one man." Whenever we get a revival amongst God's children, we shall also get unity of action. Not because we all agree to follow one man, or his teaching (as, alas! is too much the case with many I fear in this day), but because we are all led of that one Spirit, that leads all alike, because He leads each one according to the mind of God.

Have you ever noticed a man with the palsy? how his limbs continually are twitching and moving. Poor man, he has no power to control them; but let health be restored to that body, and immediately the power or authority of the head is owned, every limb moves in union with and in subjection to that head. So, if God's people are restored to a healthy condition of soul, the result must be unity of action, for they will own the Head, and that Head is Christ; and He will only lead His people in one way by His Spirit (1 Cor. i. 10).

"And they spake unto Ezra the scribe, to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord commanded to Israel." There are two things to notice here. They did not ask Ezra what had been the practice of the children of Israel in former years; had they done so they would have made a sad mistake; in fact, they would have but begun to copy, in all probability, the very failures for which God had dealt in judgment

with their forefathers. The other point is, that it was the commandment which the Lord had commanded to Israel. They were not about to set up some new thing; but simply to find out what the old way was, that way in which God would have them to walk. This would be no easy task for them; for just as the old foundation on which they had to build the wall of Jerusalem afresh, was covered up with much rubbish, so that no little part of their labour and strength would be occupied in clearing this away, so, no doubt, there would be the much rubbish of human tradition, and the false practices of past generations, to be cleared from their minds before they could be built up in the truth of God.

This we may very clearly see by our Lord's words in the New Testament, "Ye have made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition" (Matt. xv. 6); and again, "Teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. xv. 9). But this feeble company was anxious to do, and therefore the Lord was willing to teach them; and though they were but a weak remnant, they began to try and perform what God had commanded their nation to do.

The result of this was that God taught them something, in doing of which they had great joy. Had they been led by tradition, they would have lost this blessing; for the nation of Israel had neglected this since the days of Joshua.

But, before dwelling more especially on this point, let us notice the third verse: "And the ears of the people were attentive unto the book of the law;" (verse 8), "So they read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." In these two verses we will again notice two points. The first, that the people were very anxious to understand the book of the law, they stood "from the light (see margin) to the mid-day," and this went on for days—as we may see from the chapter—for the thirteenth and eighteenth verses show us that they continued eagerly to listen to the Word. They did not come together simply to keep an ordinance of the Lord, but to seek to know, and thus to do His mind in all things. How often we hear the expression, "Come out to break bread," as if this was the only thing. Israel did not come out to keep the Passover only, they came out to God, and to seek to carry out, in all things, His mind as they learned it; so are we also called if we have truly come out to

the Lord to seek in *all* things to walk in obedience to His written Word, that Word which, as we see in the end of the third chapter of second Timothy, is all-sufficient in the day of apostasy.

The second thing is, the words in the eighth verse, "and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." They were not satisfied with sitting and listening, but they desired fully to make what they heard their own; and what was the result of this? The ninth verse tells us, "All the people wept when they heard the words of the law." They got a great emptying, and a great humbling, before God could fill them with His joy, and lift them up in His presence. And is not this ever God's way? Does not a revival amongst God's children mean being brought into a greater measure of fellowship with Himself? Thus in the near light of His presence, we shall first be humbled at seeing how far we have departed from His commands, we shall humble ourselves as those did in His presence, and in thus doing, He will fill us with His joy, which is our strength. And so we find there was much joy amongst this little company (verse 10), because they had listened to the Word, and the Word had humbled them. But now, notice again, they did not think they had learned everything that was needful, because they had begun to learn a little. No! it was a true revival, and so what they had learned only made them anxious to hear the more, as we before noticed in the thirteenth verse.

And now, a few more words on the fourteenth verse, "they found it written in the law." Dear reader, notice this specially. They have not been satisfied with their past experience, nor with the joy that they already have had, but again it is to the law afresh they turn, and afresh from it they learn that which in carrying out re-fills them with the joy of the Lord.

How beautiful this is! how our God would have us a happy and a rejoicing people! and if His law is our delight, it will ever be His delight to bless and fill us with joy in His presence. Let us remember this joy was continually drawn afresh from a walk in obedience to the mind of their God, which they had been very attentive to learn.

But there is a point here I would specially notice. Has not many a child of God in this day—who with Bible in hand is simply seeking to learn the mind of God, and to walk in the way that He teaches him—been met with this argument: "So, you think you

are wiser than all the good men that have ever lived before you, and have found out some new thing, or some new doctrine that they never learned? what presumption!"

What is the answer? Surely it is this: "No, we do not set up to be wiser than all these; but we do set up the Word of God against all the traditions of the past and present, and we test the practice of those that have gone before us by that Word, and we do believe that God is able thus to teach us where they have failed, as they might have learned it themselves; and where we also have failed in the past by following their traditions.

The remnant of Israel in all their weakness found out that which the nation had apparently lost sight of for generations, and in doing it—not in knowing it only—they found great joy. I refer to the Feast of Tabernacles.

Dear fellow-saint! I would press on myself and you that to be ignorant of God's truth is one sin, but to know that truth, and not to do it, is a greater; it is not in only knowing our Bibles well that we get the blessing, but in knowing the truth, and *doing it*.

And now, in closing these remarks, I would yet wish to say a few words in practical application.

Some fifty years ago, a few followers of the Lord began to search into His Word, laying aside the traditions of men. This was a good beginning, and there can be no doubt that this true revival amongst God's saints, had the result of drawing together in brotherly love those who had been drawn into closer fellowship with their risen Lord, and those who had been led by the Word to look for His immediate return, a truth apparently almost lost sight of by the Church for ages past. How far these Christians were humbled in His presence for their failure, how much they even wept, as did the remnant, on account of this failure, the Day will declare. How far they went on in the patient study of the Word, learning the mind of their God, and growing in likeness to Him, He alone knows. It is for us to judge ourselves, and to be faithful before the Lord in these things. But that which we see around us at the present time we may and must judge. Are not the traditions of "*the brethren*" taking the place of the written Word? Are we not told that this and that was *their* practice from the first? and are we not, dear reader, in these days of increased light, and yet increasing evil, called upon

“earnestly to contend for the faith *once* delivered to the saints” (Jude 3) ?

Is it not that brethren seem to have got satisfied with a position, that there is little growth in our midst, little power, and little joy ?

Is it not that we are being so conformed to the world, worldly dress, worldly talk, and worldly ways, in fact so like the world, that we meet but little persecution from it? Everything is to be tolerated is the cry of Christendom: Is not that cry finding an echo in the very midst of those who were gathered out once to the Name of the Lord Jesus? Is their history to be a parallel with the history of that remnant of Israel we have been occupied with? When their Lord came to them, tradition had so blinded their eyes that they received Him not; only a remnant out of that remnant was truly waiting for Him (see John i. 11), and the rest were blinded.

Is the same sad history to be repeated? Is not the charity which speaks well of everything and anything, and will not tolerate the unmasking of Satan’s delusions: I say, is not this charity but the Laodiceanism of the last days? I would ask, are these not solemn truths yet to be learned ?

I find in the next chapter of the history of that remnant we have been studying, there was yet deeper mourning, even in sackcloth and ashes, whilst they confessed their own sin and the sins of their fathers; and with this a yet further separation to their God.

May we too learn in the same spirit of deep humility—not in that spirit of pride and assumption which God will judge—whether we are separated from all that which the law of our God, if known and walked in, would separate us from. “Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you” (2 Cor. vi. 17). “Whoso despiseth the Word shall be destroyed” (Prov. xiii. 13).

J. A. B.

A HIDING-PLACE implies secrecy. He who can say unto God, “*Thou art my hiding-place,*” may go abroad about his affairs, and may pass through a thousand dangers, and yet, at the same time, have such a hiding-place in the favour and protection of God, that, when he seems to be exposed on every side, still he is secured and hidden from every evil.

## MINISTRY (*Continued*).

ARE we then to follow the Scriptures in these matters? Are we to test “churches,” as they are called, by the precepts and arrangements, which we find in the Scriptures? If so, let us test “the churches” by these sayings, and let us see how with any intelligible meaning, the following words could be addressed to the meetings in the parish church, or in a chapel of Dissenters:—“Brethren, when ye come together, *every one of you* hath a psalm, hath a doctrine: to one is given wisdom, to another knowledge, to another faith; some of you are evangelists, some teachers, some pastors, some rulers, some helps; but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to *every one of you* severally as He will; for the manifestation of the Spirit is given to *every one* to profit withal; but let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak. As *every man* hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God: if *any man* speak, let him speak as the oracles of God: if *any man* minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth.”

Here is a language of hieroglyphs to the sects; it relates to facts of which they have no cognizance, and to an order of things of which they have lost all remembrance; and yet this is the language, and these the records of the New Testament.

There are, however, two other chapters in the New Testament in which the subject is fully stated. To the Romans Paul writes (ch. xii.), “Through the grace given unto me, I say to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.” Here Paul enumerates some of the gifts, prophecy, ministry, teaching, exhorting, giving, ruling, shewing mercy.

Now whatever may be our opinion about the accurate meaning of all these gifts enumerated, this is certain, that ministry, exhortation, teaching, and ruling—four offices, which in these days are always assigned to one person, and which are always deemed to be the peculiar prerogatives or duties of the “minister”—are declared by Paul to be gifts “differing according to the grace received,” and distributable amongst many or all the members of the church, but by no means to one “minister” or clergyman. Moreover, Paul’s precepts and admonitions cannot the least be understood without perceiving this, for his remarks are to this effect: “Do not any of you in the church which is sojourning in Rome be elated with your gifts; for if you have any gift, ministry, teaching, exhortation, prophecy, or power of government, understand that it is a donation of grace, a manifestation of the Spirit dividing to every man severally as He will. You are but members of one body; the members have their proper office assigned to them, and when each member performs its functions, the whole body is in harmonious and healthy vitality.”

This being the same subject as that which Paul handles in his epistle to the Corinthians, it is interesting to notice that on both occasions he enforces his thoughts by a similar illustration—that the subject, as it were of necessity, leads him to refer to the body and the members for an intelligible and convincing similitude. Again, in his epistle to the Ephesians, we find the same statements: “There is one body, and one Spirit, . . . but unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore, He saith, when He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men . . . And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; . . . and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, into a perfect man, into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: . . . that we may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love” (iv. 4-16).

In this portion then of the Scripture we have again

the same subject and the same illustration—the Spirit divides to all as He chooses—or the church is in a capacity to receive any gifts—any believer may help in service in the church, or perhaps all may help. This is the body, and this the case of the members. Moreover, it deserves particular attention that “the growing up into the perfect man,” and “the increase of the body,” is presumed by Paul to be both possible and probable *when God’s order prevails*. He brings forward these things to show the end and object of such an arrangement. If, therefore, we find professing Christians deliberately rejecting God’s order, and setting up a ministry of the flesh instead, can we be surprised if there is not visible amongst them any “growing up into a perfect man,” and that “the increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love,” is a mystery with which they are practically unacquainted?

Here, then, is a formidable array of Scripture authority to establish the truths for which we plead. But what is the usual reply to so much and such serious evidence? Generally, an exclamation of amazement that we can propound anything so strange as that there is “no ministry, and no ordination to ministry in the New Testament.” It behoves us therefore to be still more explicit, that we may show both what Scripture does and does not teach on the subject—that we may prove our point both negatively and positively. Here, then, let it be remembered, that we are not to be deceived by the use of words diverted from their proper meaning, and conveying with them the ideas of tradition and not of the Scriptures; for there is “ministry” in the New Testament, and abundantly set forth too there, far more abundantly than we are, for the most part, prepared to receive; but it has no reference to the idea of ministry handed down to us by tradition. It is therefore important again to state the traditional before we further make manifest the scriptural idea. The ministry of professing Christendom, then, has a reference to a body of men set apart by sacerdotal ceremony from the body of believers, and ordained into an office in which they have exclusive right to preach, teach, feed, and tend the flock, and “administer the sacraments.” We have then further to enquire if the ministry of Scripture answers to this traditional representation of it?

In the New Testament, “ministry” is presented to



us as *any service of \* the saints to God and to His Church*, though in the English translation the meaning of the term is occasionally weakened or perverted. The English word frequently occurs; and in almost every instance it is the translation of one Greek word, *diaconia*. In Hebrews viii. 6, and ix. 21, "ministry" is given as the interpretation of *leitourgia*; but these two instances are the only exceptions. There are, however, several instances in which *diaconia* is translated by some other word than "ministry;" and this fact may at once enable us to understand how much confusion of thought may be introduced by a capricious translation, influenced by clerical notions. In the following instances (besides some others not given) *diaconia* is not translated "ministry," but by some other word noted in italics. (1), "Martha was cumbered about *much serving*" (Luke x. 40). (2), "There was a *murmuring* of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the *daily ministration*" (Acts vi. 1). (3), "The disciples *determined to send relief* unto the brethren which dwelt in Judæa" (Acts xi. 29). (4), "Touching the *ministering* to the saints it is superfluous for me to write to you" (2 Cor. ix. 1). (5), "Whiles by the experiment of this *ministration* they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of God" (2 Cor. ix. 13). (6), "I know thy works, and charity, and *service*" (Rev. ii. 19).

Now in all these instances, we see at once that the word *diaconia* of the original, rendered in our English translation by these various words, has no such meaning as that with which we technically invest the word "ministry;" but in the following instances, owing to confused notions and the force of preconceived opinions, very many readers do attach the technical or clerical idea to the word, though it is still in the original the same *diaconia*. "Shew whether of these two thou hast chosen that he may take part of this *ministry* and apostleship" (Acts i. 25). Ministry here is service, service to God and to His Church, not a clerical or episcopal office, as it is to be feared the translators wished the readers to understand it, if we may judge by their unwarrantable rendering of the word "bishoprick" in the 20th verse of that chapter. Again: "Say to Archippus, "Take heed to the

*ministry* which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it" (Col. iv. 17). Had *diaconia* been here translated "service," it would have far more faithfully expressed the meaning of the original, and would at the same time have put the extinguisher on many a bright flash of pulpit eloquence, which this text has elicited, when it suited the preachers to deliver orations on the "ministerial office." Archippus had been known as one in service to the Lord and to His people: what that service was, we cannot now say, but it does not at all appear that it was preaching the Gospel or the exercise of the pastoral office. Archippus might have had no gift for government: what his gift was it is impossible for us now to determine; only this is apparent, that the service for which he was known he had "received in the Lord:" but such is the force of customary notions that his "ministry" is generally supposed to have been an officially ordained pastorate, so that ministers of the established church claim Archippus as one of their clergy; and dissenting\* ministers, with equal confidence, tell us that he was a minister of a congregational church.

In 2 Tim. iv. 5, we have another text which is understood in the same way: "Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy *ministry*," meaning the whole service of Timothy's redeemed life, as purchased by a price to be a servant of Christ his Lord. What sort of service that is, Paul explains in the following words, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith;" for this is the *diaconia* often on his mind. Any service and all service is "ministry" in the New Testament. "I go to Jerusalem to *minister* unto the saints" (Rom. xv. 25). God will not forget your labour of love . . . in that ye have *ministered* to the saints and do *minister*" (Heb. vi. 10), *diakonēsantes kai diakonountes*, words which the translators elsewhere turn into "the deacon's office," when it suits their purpose. "As every man hath received the gift, even so *minister* (*diakonountes*) the same one

\* We are not speaking here of the ministry of Christ; for His service is also called ministry, and He Himself a minister.

\* I once heard an impressive and able sermon of unusual length from a celebrated dissenting minister on Col. iv. 17. Throughout the whole of his elaborate discourse, he took it for granted that Archippus was a "regularly ordained minister." The Fathers are not quite so sure of the matter. Jerome suggests that he was a "bishop:" Ambrose suspects he was a "deacon:" but why not an archbishop or an archdeacon?

to another" (1 Peter iv. 10)—a text which not only implies a general liberty of ministry, but, according to the management of the translators in other passages, might be made to represent all believers as "ministers," which indeed is the meaning of the text when ministry is rightly understood.

We need not wonder, however, at the mistakes on this subject, commonly cherished by the uninstructed, when we see the spurious notes at the end of the Epistles, regularly printed in our Bibles as part of the Scriptures; as, for instance, "This second epistle unto Timotheus, ordained the first bishop of the Ephesians, was written," &c. Very many readers of the Bible believe these notes to be genuine; and with such a belief, we can easily comprehend what must also be their mistakes about "ministry."

We may then conclude this part of our inquiry by this canon, that a minister never, in one single instance in the New Testament, means a clerical functionary; that "ministry" has the meaning of *service* in every instance where it is expressive of the actions of Christians; and that it frequently does refer to the service of all the saints to one another. B.

#### EXTRACT.

**W**HEN a few, some half-dozen of us, first met here, we met on distinct, definite grounds—grounds from which, by God's help, I mean never to depart. Some persons say we meet simply as Christians; but this is a mistake. We receive one another as Christians,\* but we do not meet simply as Christians, indeed, it is absurd to say so. Your ground of meeting was as you state. "I fully thought when we first broke bread, that we were meeting simply as Christians, in obedience to our Lord, to shew His death till He come, desiring to be instructed, and led on in all things according to God's Word, trusting as we gave heed to that, to be guided more and more by His Spirit into all truth, and hoping to be brought into unity of judgment respecting it."

In order to explain my meaning more fully, we will go back to the period, when, in obedience to the command of our Lord, we were buried together by baptism into death (Rom. vi. 4), and in the same year

\* This refers to believers identified with us in Church position, and who are received as being already in fellowship with us, locality hindering them from meeting with us stately.

resigned our connection with the Society of Friends. In all this, we did not act (let me say) simply as Christians, but as Christians having light on our path, which the body we left did not recognise (of that body, we used to hear that it was simple Christianity—that it had no defined principles of doctrine, and so forth. Was this satisfactory to us? did we not leave it expressing definite grounds for our doing so?) We were then obliged, as Christians, to contemplate the divided and distracted state of the professing Church, and to choose our future path. We broke bread for some time with a dissenting church here, simply as Christians. We were bound to no principles of theirs nor did we own any principles ourselves as distinctive from theirs, except negatively, in refusing to unite with them in their church membership. Now, I ask, why did we leave these brethren? Could you not have realised all that you wished, without taking a step wounding to their feelings—painful to our own (at least to mine), and I here say distinctly, *if not the result of real light upon our path from God's Word, of all others the most sectarian.*

Now I would ask you to reflect, whether the position we took of separation was not connected with certain clear and definite light from the Word upon prophetic and dispensational truth, and acted on by us after long and, I hope, prayerful consideration? Did we not take a position outside the camp of the professing church? (Heb. xiii. 13). A position of acknowledged failure in the corporate body professing the name of Christ, and consequently a place of confessed weakness, and yet of blessing; as realising that "where two or three meet together" in the name of Jesus Christ, there is He in the midst (Matt. xviii. 20)? Did we think of setting up again the Church in its primitive state? Did we not acknowledge that it had failed altogether, and that our only hope was that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ? Did not this hope cause us to rejoice in the midst of the desolation, and throw a flood of light over the position of the church—the Bride—as expecting the return of the heavenly Bridegroom, and not expecting order, establishment, or rest here? Did we not take our stand on distinct principle in the abandonment of all clericalism and human arrangements, in recognising the Holy Ghost present in the body dividing to every man severally as He will? (1 Cor. xii. 11). Did not the very stand

we took in gathering around a table new as to this place imply that we believed the Lord had taught us truths new to those by whom we were surrounded, and, as we believed, profitable to the whole Church of God? Should we ever have met there but for these distinctive truths, held in however much feebleness and indistinctness? I am sure we should not. When we began meeting together, our position troubled the minds and grieved the hearts of the children of God around us. Did we seek to spread our views, to win such from their communions to unite with us, because simply met as Christians? Truly, if we had no other reason for so acting, our conduct would have been most unjustifiable. But, we believed that the position we held was a right one, and that the truths we held were a precious deposit for the good of all the children of God. What I insist on is, that our position from the first, though counted by many, no doubt, sectarian and presumptuous, but (as I trust) guided by the Lord was not the quiet unostentatious one of mere Christians, knowing nothing but the pardon of our sins, confessedly ignorant of all distinctive truth, and embarking on the shoreless sea of opinion and principle, to be drifted hither and thither by every fresh wind of doctrine. We did not meet simply as Christians; but as Christians having ourselves received light from God's Word, and desiring to teach others what we found a blessing to ourselves. In practically carrying out this we have proved our own weakness, and with it also the Lord's grace and faithfulness.

THE OPERATIONS OF GRACE.—The grandest operations, both in nature and in grace, are the most silent and imperceptible. The shallow brook bubbles in its passage, and is heard by every one; but the coming in of the seasons is silent and unseen. The storm rages and alarms, but its fury is soon exhausted, and its effects are partial and soon remedied; but the dew, though gentle and unheard, is immense in quantity, and the very life of large portions of the earth. And these are pictures of the operations of grace in the church and in the soul.

THE BIBLE resembles an extensive and highly-cultivated garden, where there is a vast variety and profusion of fruits and flowers; some of which are more essential or more splendid than others; but there is not a blade suffered to grow in it, which has not its use and beauty in the system. Salvation for sinners is the grand truth presented everywhere, and in all points of light; but *the pure in heart* sees a thousand traits of the Divine character, of himself, and of the world—some striking and bold; others cast, as it were, into the shade, and designed to be searched for and examined—some direct, others by way of intimation or inference.

BEWARE how you suffer the infidel to draw you upon metaphysical ground. If he get you there he will have something to say. The evidences and the declarations of God's Word are the weapons with which he must be combated, and before which he must fall.

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## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to "prove all things," and "hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender.

### QUESTION No. XXXV.

*What is our duty towards one who says he does not hold the doctrine of the non-eternity of punishment, but who sympathizes with those who do hold it?*

#### REPLY.

Let it once be distinctly understood that the *holder* of this evil doctrine, whether it be the annihilation view or the universal restoration view, has erred from

the faith so fundamentally that he must of necessity be put away from the fellowship of those gathered in the name of the Lord, and the way is greatly cleared toward rightly replying to the above question.

We know of no doctrine being propagated at the present day so subtle, so mischievous, or making such gigantic strides both among professed Christians and real Christians, as this. Under pretence of vindicat-

ing the merciful character of God, it rejects His Word; undermines the truth as to sin, judgment, and atonement; and offers "another gospel," a satanic lie, to soothe the guilty conscience, to remove the fear of coming wrath, and fasten around the sinner the chains of his sins.

To carry out the judgment of God upon such as have thus made shipwreck of the faith is not merely to refuse them a place at the "table of the Lord," but so to separate from their fellowship, that we neither "keep company" with them, "eat" with them, or "bid them God-speed." It is practically "delivering them to Satan," that under his power, as God's instrument, they may learn the evil of their ways, and be brought to repentance.

To sympathize with one so dealt with by the gathered saints, in obedience to the Lord, to have fellowship with, or make a companion of such, is therefore a most serious offence, and, if persisted in, is certain to result in the sympathizer imbibing the error. "Their word will eat as doth a canker" (2 Tim. ii. 17); a "little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Gal. v. 8-10).

The duty, then, of the assembly towards the sympathizer is surely plain—"Warn them that are unruly" (1 Thess. v. 14). Those who are exercising shepherd care over the flock of God ought not to fail in faithfulness here. It is specially to them that this exhortation in 1 Thess. v. 14 is addressed—compare verse 12.

The result of faithful, loving, patient dealing will either be to withdraw the sympathizer from his hazardous intercourse, or to manifest in him a spirit of lawlessness, which, if not repented of, will not take long to ripen into such evil in life or doctrine as will clearly show the mind of the Lord concerning him.

Each case will therefore require to be dealt with according to its special character. The circumstances and spirit of each will differ so materially that only in waiting upon the Lord will guidance be rightly obtained. No amount of knowledge, no rules, not even texts of Scripture in abundance, will enable those who are acting for God to dispense with real dependence upon Himself. "Except the Lord keepeth the city, the watchman waketh in vain" (Ps. cxxvi. 1).

#### QUESTION No. XXXVI.

*Will every believer on the Lord Jesus have a crown in glory, or are "crowns" conditional?*

#### REPLY.

The crown in Scripture has reference to two very distinct truths. First—It denotes the Melchizedek character of the believer's priesthood. The priests of the house of Aaron wore no crowns, for Judah was the royal tribe. But Christ is after the order of Melchizedek—a King as well as a Priest—and His saints, being one with Him, are also made kings as well as priests unto God; and in token of their kingly as well as priestly standing are seen in Rev. iv. 4 not only clothed in white raiment, indicating the holiness of their priestly character, but also as seated upon thrones, and having upon their heads crowns of gold. But again, in ver. 10, they are seen casting their crowns before the throne, so that in this sense all believers are alike crowned, all being kings, and all are uncrowned, because of their felt unworthiness of such a dignity.

But, second—The crown more frequently has reference to the prize given to the winner in the Grecian games, the allusions to which are very frequent in the New Testament. This was more properly a chaplet or wreath, composed of evergreens, therefore spoken of as "corruptible," or "fading away." They that ran in the race, ran all, but *one* only received the prize (1 Cor. ix. 24). Moreover, if a man strove for masteries (*i.e.*, as a wrestler), yet was he not crowned except he had striven lawfully (*i.e.*, according to the rules of the game, 2 Tim. ii. 5). Again, it is written, "Let no man take thy crown" (Rev. iii. 11).

From these Scriptures we conclude that, in this sense, it is quite possible for a believer to lose that special reward of service which will be granted to those who are faithful to the Lord.

Such a case is seen in 1 Cor. iii. 14, 15—one receives "a reward;" another "suffers loss," not the loss of salvation—for it is written, "But he himself shall be saved"—but the loss of *the reward* that would have been his had his service stood the test of the judgment-seat of Christ.

We read of a crown of righteousness, a crown of life, a crown of glory (2 Tim. iv. 8; James i. 12; 1 Peter v. 4). The righteousness, the life, the glory are all ours now and eternally in Christ. These are never spoken of in Scripture as capable of being either won by faithfulness or lost by unfaithfulness. They are the inalienable right of God's elect. But the crown, or reward of faithful service, is quite different. Let us not despise the grace that offers a reward; but

run, strive, labour, lay aside every weight, keep under our bodies, set ourselves in right earnest to be, through His grace, winners and not losers: amid all present suffering and loss, having respect unto the recompense of the reward.

QUESTION No. XXXVII.

*Please explain Psalm lxxii. 16. What is the "handful of corn?"*

REPLY.

By comparing this verse with Isaiah xxvii. 6, xxxvii. 31, and Hosea ii. 23, we gather that the handful of corn refers to the spared remnant of Israel, who, having passed through "the great tribulation," and having been in that furnace of affliction refined like silver and tried like gold (Zech. xiii. 9), shall be, though only as it were "a handful" in number, the seed through which the whole earth shall be blessed.

Through Israel's fall blessing has indeed come to the Gentiles; but this blessing, though of the highest possible order, is the portion of comparatively few—an election only out of all nations to be a kind of first-fruit unto God.

But the blessing that shall result from Israel's restoration to the Lord and to their land will be vastly greater, according to Rom. xi. 12-15. The thought of an evangelized and converted world prior to that is but a dream of man's imagining.

Ere then, apostasy must run its course, iniquity must come to the full, and judgment must do its short but certain work.

QUESTION No. XXXVIII.

*What does Scripture teach as to oversight when there is more than one gathering in a town? Is there anything in God's Word to guide as to whether there should be one general oversight over all the gatherings; or should those who have the care in each assembly be responsible only for the particular assembly to which they belong?*

REPLY.

The nature of oversight or pastoral work, we believe, renders it impossible to fulfil its responsibilities beyond the sphere of that assembly with which one is specially associated. He who has to "watch for souls" must surely be habitually present "on the first day of the week," when the disciples "come together to break bread." Part of his duty is to see that they "forsake not the assembling of themselves together." More-

over, if, as we believe, it is the responsibility of those taking oversight to guide or take the lead in every case of receiving into or putting away from fellowship—feeding the flock, and exhorting practically in connection with the discipline of the house of God—how could any effectually fulfil such a ministry if only occasionally present, or if time and attention be distributed over several assemblies?

Moreover, would it not be a mere matter of form to give out in one assembly, as desiring fellowship, the name of a person who is not personally known to any, lives in a different district, and attends a different assembly? And would not such a course foster the lack of interest as to who is received or put away which prevails in most meetings?

Another objection is, that if there were a general oversight meeting professing to have care of a number of assemblies, many would not presume to attend such a meeting who would willingly, in a quiet way, help in care and oversight in a local assembly. The central oversight meeting would come to be attended only by "magnates," and minor gift would be repressed rather than developed.

We know of no distinct Scripture bearing upon the circumstances of the present time, when cities are so extensive as to be equivalent almost to districts. There were probably different assemblies in Jerusalem, and there may also have been in Rome or Corinth, but we do not read of them as such. But, whilst holding the distinct responsibility of the oversight in each separate assembly, we should seek to warn against a spirit of independency and isolation. In Scripture we constantly find fellowship in oversight, and a coming together of those who had responsibility, upon occasions which called for counsel and united action.

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| 1878— ,, .....     | 2/ | 1875—Out of Print, |      | 1872— ,, .....     | 1/10 |
| 1877—Out of Print, |    | *1874—Paper, ....  | 1/10 |                    |      |

\* These include "The Assemblies."

# THE NORTHERN WITNESS

LONDON

JAMES E. HAWKINS,  
12 Paternoster Sq., E.C.,  
and 36 Baker Street, W.

DECEMBER,  
1880.

GLASGOW

PUBLISHING OFFICE,  
40 Sauchiehall Street.

## MARTHA AND MARY.

Luke x. 38-42.

I HAVE had much comfort in my own soul in tracing out the blessed effects of Mary's close communion with the Lord, and also have received warning and instruction from the different character which is given us of Martha. Martha was a saint, and loved by the Lord as well as Mary, for Jesus loves the weak ones and watches over them in an especial manner, and being one of His own purchased people, nothing could separate Martha from the Saviour. This, therefore, is not a question of acceptance with God, or of forgiveness of sins. Both sisters belonged to Jesus, both were saints, but we learn the blessing that belongs to communion with the Lord, and the nearness to Him, and the power with Him which it gives the saint. This Mary had, and this is what Martha wanted. Martha served. In active busy service there is much to please the flesh. I would rather deal with the flesh in an unconverted person than with the flesh in the saint. The flesh in the saint is very hard to deal with. Mary sat at the feet of Jesus, and there learned His mind. Knowledge of Jesus' mind draws the saint into closer communion with the Lord, and then we learn more of His mind. One acts upon the other, increase of one is increase of the other. I don't mean by learning the mind of Jesus, truth learned by the intellect. Not that apprehension of Scripture that enables us to turn with readiness from one passage to another, in confirmation of any truth or doctrine. But a knowledge of the mind of the Lord learned from Him, and by His Spirit. This is what the saint wants, and this is what the saint gets

by sitting at the feet of Jesus, and hearing His voice; and it is only this that will enable us to rise above circumstances. If we have not this, it is because we are straitened in ourselves, and not in the Lord. He is full of blessing for us, and only waits to bestow that blessing on us. He wants from our hands that touch of faith that will bring virtue out of Him. This is what Mary had. She had the golden key that opens the treasures of riches in Jesus; and this is ours also. It belongs to the weakest amongst us; had we more of the mind of Christ, and closer communion with Him, to lead us to the use of it. This is what Martha wanted. She was an active busy person, serving the Lord, and loved by the Lord, and her service was perhaps legitimate, but it had not the power to draw out the human sympathies of Jesus, or the display of His Divine power, which Mary's close communion with the Lord did. Let us follow Mary's example. I speak now to the saints, and not of pardon or acceptance. Forgetting those things that are behind, let us press on to that which is before, as Paul did, our high calling, living in the heavenlies with Jesus (Phil. iii. 13), raised with Him to the resurrection life.

The next mention that is made of Martha and of Mary is in John xi. 20. Martha goes to meet Jesus, but Mary sits still in the house. Mary did not know that Jesus was coming (verses 20-27). This is the reason she did not go to meet Him. Martha makes a good confession. But this confession does not draw out either the tears or the power of Jesus. She goes to Mary and says, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee." As soon as Mary hears this, she rises quickly and goes to Jesus. His precious name is

enough for her. "The Master calleth for thee." "Thy name is as ointment poured forth." The savour of that name leads her quickly to Him. If we enjoyed the same close communion with Jesus that Mary did, His name would have the same power over us. It would lead us to Him, and lead us above all the circumstances of earth. (29th verse) We know from this that Mary was ignorant of the Lord having come (at verse 20). As soon as she hears of it, she rises quickly and goes to Him; when she meets Him, she takes her own place, she falls at His feet, she draws out the sorrows of Jesus. "Jesus wept." All here calls for weeping and sorrow. The name of Jesus trampled on and dishonoured; sin, and sickness, and death. I would not say to any afflicted saint, "Weep not." We should be very tender in attempting to give consolation. None can give comfort but those who have felt the same sorrow. Jesus wept in His human nature, and when on earth. But in His resurrection body, His word to another Mary is "Woman, why weepest thou?" (John xx. 15.) When the saint is clothed in his resurrection body, no sorrow, no tears then. When they come to the grave, Martha, seeing not the power of Jesus over death, says, (John xi. 39) "Lord, by this time he stinketh; for he hath been dead four days;" but the faith of Mary draws out that power. This act shows Jesus as truly the perfecter of faith (Heb. xii. 2). Everything here was against sight—Lazarus had been four days in the grave. But Jesus, the perfecter of faith—not of *our* faith, but of *faith*—overcomes all.

We go on to the next chapter, and here again find Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus. "Martha serves;" Lazarus sits at the table with Jesus—type of the resurrection; and in this character to sit at the table with Jesus was his proper place (Matt. xxvi. 39; John xii. 3). "Then took Mary a pound of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus." It was this same principle made Paul say, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Phil. iii. 8). Mary looked upon everything as dross in comparison with Jesus. She wiped His feet with her hair, showing that that which was her glory and ornament as a woman (1 Cor. xi. 15) was only valuable when used in the service of the Lord. And this is all we hear of Mary, for Mary of Bethany and Mary Magdalene are not the same

person. I have come to this conclusion by a close search into the subject. One anointed the head of Jesus, the other His feet; one anointing takes place in the city, the other at Bethany; one was done early in the Lord's ministry (Luke vii. 37), the other at its close, just before the feast of the Passover. I have looked for Mary of Bethany at the grave of Jesus, but she was not amongst the disciples who sought for the body of the Lord, and to me the reason is obvious; but I do not wish to press it on any who cannot receive it. She looked for Jesus in the resurrection life; she knew He was not in the grave, but that He was in the heavenlies; and there she would seek Him, and know Him no more after the flesh (2 Cor. v. 16).

Let us not be cast down in our souls, or despise the weak ones. When we think of Martha—Jesus loved her; and this is beautifully shown in the mention of her name when Mary's is omitted (John xi. 5). It reminds us of the love of the Lord, and of His kindness to Peter (Mark xvi. 7). But let us follow Mary's example. It is this communion with Jesus our souls want; this speedy following when He calls; this giving up to Him all that is precious and valuable. Let us do this, and the same effects will follow. "The house was filled with the odour of the ointment."

C. H.

### THE SAVIOUR'S SYMPATHY AND GRACE.

**T**HERE is a sympathy within  
My Saviour's tender breast,  
That meets the sorrows of my heart,  
And soothes them into rest.

There is a grace that beareth all  
My wayward thankless ways,  
That covereth all my sin with blood,  
And never hides its face;

That tells my heart to turn to Him,  
Whate'er the failure be,  
To trust the love that gave Himself  
To bear the curse for me;

To find within Himself alone  
A friendship fully tried,  
And on His arm alone to lean,  
And trust to none beside.

Jesus invites me to His heart  
To tell out all my care,  
That He may heal, not rend the wound,  
That I can scarcely bear.

His thoughts are only thoughts of love,  
And thus He longs to know  
Whatever may oppress within,  
His suited grace to show.



## EXODUS.

CHAP. xv. 22.—The Israelites now enter into their wilderness experience, "Marah," and its bitter waters sweetened by the tree cast into it: typical of the cross of Christ sweetening the bitter waters of affliction to all the faithful. See Rom. v. 1, 2, in connection with Israel's song, and Rom. v. 3-5 with their wilderness experience at Marah. Elim: typical of ministry in the church in the power of the Holy Ghost. In connection with the numbers "twelve" and "seventy," see Luke ix. 1, x. 1.

Chap. xvi.—The "manna:" type of Christ the Bread of Heaven. The "dew:" type of the Holy Ghost, the Spirit in the heart and the conscience sanctifying Christ the "heavenly food" to the soul of the believer. Ver. 14.—(1) The manna came from heaven: Christ the true bread came down from heaven. John vi. (2) It was "small:" Christ was "meek and lowly of heart," a "worm and no man," "reproach of men and despised of the people." Matt. xi. 29; Psalm xxii. 6. (3) "Round:" symbolical of eternity and love. John i. 1, 2; Luke xv. 22. (4) It was white, emblematical of purity and holiness: Christ "knew no sin," "did no sin," and was "without sin." 2 Cor. v. 21; 1 Peter ii. 22; Heb. iv. 15. (5) It was on the ground: typical of the humility of Christ; made "Himself of no reputation." Phil. ii. 7; Prov. xviii. 12; Luke xiv. 11. (6) It was "sweet:" symbolical of Christ, who was a "sweet savour" unto God; also of the believer. Eph. v. 2; 2 Cor. ii. 15. The Sabbath: prefiguring the great day of rest during eternity for all those who have fed on the manna (Christ). Ver. 33, 34: type of Christ, the "hidden manna," now in heaven. Heb. ix. 4; Rev. ii. 17.

Chap. xvi., they murmur for flesh and bread; here, chap. xvii., for water. Matt. vi. 25-34. The rock smitten: type of Christ smitten on the cross; the water, of the Holy Ghost. John iv. 14; vii. 37-39. Amalek: type of the flesh. Rom. vi. 7, 8; Gal. v. Moses on the top of the hill: type of Christ in heaven. Heb. vii. 26. The rod: symbolical of power.

Chap. xviii.—In this chapter we have three distinct dispensational truths portrayed—the "Jew," Israel; the "Church," Zipporah and her sons, Gershom (stranger), Eliezer (my God an help); the "Gentile." Jethro: typical of the coming kingdom—a millennial scene. Psalm cv. 2; cxlv. 11; Acts xiv. 27; xv. 12.

Chaps. xix. xx.—The law given. The law, or "ten

words," were never given to the Gentile, only to the Jew, or Israel as a nation. The Old Testament dispensation was one of "law," the New Testament dispensation of "grace." John i. 17; Heb. x. 28; Gal. iii. 10; Rom. x. 5; Rom. iii. 20. Thus the believer is not *under law*, but *grace*. Hence, those who put themselves under the "law," or ten commandments, should keep the Jewish Sabbath, which is our *Saturday*. Chap. xx. 22-24: the "altar of earth:" type of Christ "born of a woman, born under the law." "Altar of stone:" type of Christ perfect and complete; no need of merit of man; no "steps" to this "altar," that all may reach Him. "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." In the former part of this chapter we have the "law," and man as a doer; from ver. 24 we have "grace," and man as a worshipper, but without an altar of his own hewing, or steps of his own making. Christ the only way, the only truth, the only life. "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." John xiv. 6.

Chap. xxi. 1-6.—The Hebrew servant: type of Christ the willing servant, wholly devoted to the Father. Ver. 5: "Christ loved the Church," Eph. v. 25-27; Psalm xl. 6.

Chap. xxi. from ver. 7, to chap. xxiii. contains laws and regulations for Israel.

Chap. xxiv.—Worship under "law," afar off; see the contrast under "grace," Heb. iv. 16, "come *boldly* unto the throne of grace;" "*boldness* to enter into the holiest," Heb. x. 19. "The altar, the book, and the people" sprinkled by blood: typical of the holiness and purity of God's place and people. Heb. x. 22; 1 Peter i. 2; Heb. ix. 19-21. Ver. 11, "They saw God, and did eat and drink," Luke xv. 22, 23; Song v. 1. Ver. 12, Moses in the Mount: typical of where Christ is in the presence of the Father, and illustrative of where the true servant of God should be, in His presence *alone* to see and learn of Him.

Chap. xxv.—Willing offerings for the construction of the tabernacle, 2 Cor. viii. 11-15. The tabernacle, its coverings and vessels: type of Christ, as well as prefiguring the hour of Israel's "fulness and reconciliation" yet to be fulfilled, Ezek. xxxvii. 26-28; Isa. lxi. 9. Christ is the "ark," as well as the "mercy-seat," Heb. ix. 4; Rom. iii. 25. Christ is the "table," as well as the "shew-bread" or "presence-bread," and the "candlestick." Thus the believer has in Christ *food and light*, John vi. 35; viii. 12.

Chap. xxvi.—The curtains, the groundwork of which like the “vail,” was of fine twined linen: typical of the purity of Christ, His manhood, Rev. xix. 7, 8; “blue,” of His heavenly character, Col. ii. 1; Eph. ii. 6; “purple,” of His kingly glory, “born king of the Jews,” Matt. ii. 2; “scarlet,” royalty, “the son of David,” Matt. i. 5; scarlet also denotes suffering, Matt. xxvii. 28. Curtains of “goats’ hair:” typical of Christ “as a root out of a dry ground,” Isa. liii. “Rams’ skins dyed red:” of Christ’s devotedness unto death; also illustrative of separatedness unto God, 2 Tim. iv. 6; also, affliction and sorrow, Isaiah liii. 4. “Badgers’ skins:” typical of Christ without form or comeliness, Song i. 5, 6. The “vail:” type of Christ’s flesh, John i. 14; Matt. xxvi. 52; Heb. x. 20.

Chap. xxvii.—The brazen altar: type of Christ’s manhood standing the fire of Divine righteousness. The ark, the mercy-seat, the table, and the candlestick, *inside* the tent of the tabernacle, were *all of gold*: symbolical of the Divine nature in the “man Christ Jesus.” “Brass:” symbolical of righteousness demanding judgment of sin and all uncleanness; this we see in the brazen altar *outside* of the tent of the tabernacle.

Chap. xxviii.—Aaron and his sons: typical of Christ and the church. The ephod: typical of Christ’s special glory as the High Priest. The girdle: symbolical of the perfection of His service as High Priest, Heb. iv. 14; Rev. xiii. 15. The breastplate, or oracle: typical of Christ our High Priest having our names written upon His heart in the presence of God. Urim and Thummim: light and perfection. The blue robe of the ephod: the heavenly character of Christ; and also typical of His advocacy and intercession, Heb. ix. 24. Pomegranates and bells of gold: typical of fruit and confession combined, John xv. 5; Matt. x. 32. The breastplate, “oracle:” typical of the mediation of Christ between God and man, and He who bears the iniquity of our most holy things, Heb. ii. 9; 1 John ii. 1, 2. The garments for Aaron’s sons: typical of the Church associated with Christ in Divine power, and holiness, and purity, Gen. iii. 21; 1 Cor. i. 30, 31.

Chap. xxix.—Consecration of the priesthood. Aaron was called: type of Christ, also of the Church, Rom. viii. 28-30; Heb. iii. 1. They were brought, Heb. xiii. 20; Psa. xl. Washed, Eph. v. 25, 26; Rev. i. 5; 1 Cor. vi. 11. And clothed, Gen. iii. 21; 1 Cor. i. 30, 31. Aaron anointed before the blood was shed: typical of Christ who was anointed with the Holy Ghost *before*

His blood was shed upon the cross, Luke iv. 18. The sons of Aaron were not anointed until *after* the sacrifice was offered and the blood was shed: typical of the Church and every true believer, cleansed first then anointed with the Holy Ghost, Heb. i. 3; 2 Cor. i. 21, 22; 1 John ii. 20. A stranger was not allowed to eat of the flesh and of the bread, only Aaron and his sons; ere such, or a sojourner, or an hired servant, could eat of the “holy things,” they had to be bought by, or born in the priest’s house, Lev. xxii. 10, 11: hence, only those who are bought with precious blood, and born again from above, can feed upon Christ, or have a right to the privileges of the Church of God, Heb. xiii. 10; 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15.

Chap. xxx.—Altar of incense: type of the intercession of Christ, “who ever liveth to make intercession for us.” The atonement money, which was to be a ransom, an offering, and a memorial: illustrative of *all* believers standing equally on the same ground, namely, the precious blood of Christ. The brazen laver: typical of the washing of water by the word, John xvii. The holy anointing oil: of the graces of the Holy Ghost, which were found in Christ, Psa. xlv. 8; Acts x. 38; and now bestowed upon the Church, Eph. iv. 8-13. Sweet spices: of the preciousness of the perfections of Christ.

Chap. xxxi.—The call of Bezaleel and Aholiab, Isa. xliii. 1; Gal. i. 15; Eph. iv. 11-13.

Chap. xxxii.—Communion and apostasy, Matt. xxiv. 48; 2 Peter iii. 4; 1 Sam. xiii. 8. Dependence on man leads to independence of God, hence apostasy and false worship, a “molten calf” *seen* preferred to the “God of Israel” *unseen*. Moses willing to become a sacrifice and his intercession: typical of Christ the willing sacrifice and intercessor, Psalm xl. 7; Isa. liii. 12.

Chap. xxxiii.—The tabernacle pitched without the camp: illustrative of Christ’s place now without the camp; also the Church’s true place for testimony, Heb. xiii. 13, 14. Moses not only confessed Israel’s sin and apostasy, but separated himself from its evil and false worship: so if our confession of the apostasy around us be real before God, it will result in our entire separation from it, Prov. xxviii. 13. The rock: type of Christ, in which the law and the Church are hid, Col. iii. 3.

Chap. xxxiv.—Moses: type of Christ having the law of God written in His heart. The vail over Moses’ face: typical of the dispensation of law, 2 Cor. iii. 14.

"The skin of Moses' face shone:" Luke ix. 29; Acts vi. 15.

From chap. xxxv. to the end we have the bringing in of the Sabbath again; the free-will offerings of the people; and their devotedness to the work and furniture of the tabernacle; their implicit obedience in carrying out *all* that the Lord commanded Moses; in its construction and rearing up, the cloud hovering over, and the glory of the Lord filling it, so that it becomes God's dwelling place. Thus we have much that is practical as well as typical recorded in the last five chapters of this book. The practical is a lesson for us who believe, ever remembering that to *obey* is better than sacrifice, and to *hearken* than the fat of rams. "And Moses did look upon all the work, and behold they had *done* it as the Lord had commanded; even so had they *done* it. And *Moses blessed them.*" Prov. viii. 34; Luke xi. 28; Rev. xxii. 14. The typical tells us of Christ, His person, His work, His coming glory.

"Thou too shalt reign! He will not wear  
His crown of joy alone!  
The earth His royal Bride shall see  
Beside Him on the throne!

"Then weep no more, 'tis all thine own—  
His crown, His joy Divine;  
And, sweeter far than all beside,  
He—He Himself—is thine!"

### GOLD.

**T**HE attention of the readers of the "Northern Witness" was directed some time ago to the figure of a Refiner "*sitting,*" as seen in Mal. iii. 3. Have any of our readers studied the purifying of gold? I have been trying to gather what information lay in my power regarding it. Some of your readers who understand the process of purifying, may, however, throw more light on the subject.

Gold takes a prominent place in Scripture. It is mentioned in the second and second last chapters of both Old and New Testaments. It is figurative of the child of God (Lam. iv. 2; Job xxiii. 10); of his works (1 Cor. iii. 12); and of "the trial of his faith" (1 Pet. i. 7). Our study now only refers to the believer.

Gold is found in the earth: "Out of it wast thou taken" (Gen. iii. 19). It is found in darkness: We are "called out of darkness" (1 Peter ii. 9). It is found in a state of filth: "Filthy is man" (Job xv. 16; Ps. xiv. 3). It is dug out of the earth: "Look unto . . . the hole of the pit whence ye are digged" (Isa. li. 1).

After being taken out of the earth, it is washed: "Ye are washed" (1 Cor. vi. 11). It is then crushed: God says to man, "My thoughts are not as your thoughts" (Isa. lv. 8); man's thoughts are "vain" (1 Cor. iii. 20), and are crushed in the presence of God, who begs him to "forsake his thoughts" (Isa. lv. 7). It is now fit for the fire; and if gold is to be refined, it must pass through the fire: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the *fiery* trial which is to try you" (1 Pet. iv. 12). "Yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto" (1 Thess. iii. 3). "When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job xxiii. 10). "The furnace is for gold; but the Lord trieth the hearts" (Prov. xvii. 3). The fire purifies it: "He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold," etc. (Mal. iii. 3).

Gold stands the fire: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation" (James i. 12). The refiner is at the expense of the fire: God had to chastise His people for their sin, yet "His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel" (Judges x. 16). The fire never injures it: "When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned" (Isa. xliii. 2). Its value is estimated by weight: "Thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just" (Isa. xxvi. 7). When refined, it is bright: "A man's wisdom maketh His face to shine" (Eccles. viii. 1). "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works" (Matt. v. 16).

Gold is precious: "The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold" (Lam. iv. 2). Pliable: Paul could say, "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere, and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound, and to suffer need" (Phil. iv. 12). It attracts attention: "Ye are the light of the world; a city that is set on an hill cannot be hid" (Matt. v. 14). Beating does not break it, but causes it to expand: "The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew" (Exodus i. 12). "I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and to all others" (Phil. i. 12, 13, margin).

Gold is liable to grow dim: "How is the gold (Israel) become dim?" (Lam. iv. 1). A gold ring constantly worn never becomes dim; because it is continually

rubbing against the flesh, and daily comes under the action of water: "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word" (Eph. v. 26). "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto, according to Thy Word" (Ps. cxix. 9). A gold chain becomes dim because it lacks the thorns is he that heareth the Word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word, and it becometh unfruitful" (Matt. xiii. 22).

Brass resembles gold: "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light" (2 Cor. xi. 14). It only becomes hard by being mixed with baser metals: "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (1 Cor. v. 6).

### MINISTRY (*Continued*).

**M**INISTRY, when rightly understood, is not merely for government, or for establishing order, securing discipline, and keeping the people in subjection, but for preserving in vigorous healthfulness the life of the body; the evidence of which is to be sought for and recognised in *the love of the brethren*. Yes, Christian reader! understand this truth that God's ministry is appointed by His most wise ordinance—not according to man's thoughts to produce a well-drilled regiment under effectual clerical management, which is the utmost extent of excellence that most people ever look to when arguing for an "ordained ministry"—but it is intended as a help to the New Commandment by which the world is to distinguish Christ's disciples (John xiii. 34). In all the passages where God's ministry is mentioned in the New Testament this is made apparent; for the mind of the Spirit concerning the ministry which He raises up, is, that it is the nursery of that love without which a visible church is an inoperative and lifeless thing, a machine out of order, and therefore useless. And hence it is that when Paul wishes to urge the love of the brethren, he, as a matter of course, connects it with "ministry:" and when he talks of ministry, he concludes as naturally, pursuing only an obvious concatenation of thought, with the kindred subject of love. In the Epistle to the Ephesians he says, "I beseech you, that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, *forbearing one*

*another in love*; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace—*there is one body*" (iv. 1-4). And having been brought by this expression of his wish and prayer to mention the "one body," he immediately proceeds to a description of that body, and the appearance it should present, in order to be capable of eliciting this "forbearance of love, and bond of peace," for which he pleads. Now this appearance is of several gifts of the Spirit manifested in the body at large, "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, *for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ*;" this is the body which possesses the power of growth, not a comely block chiselled by man's art into a handsome but dead image of the church, but the true church endowed with the faculty of augmentation, and "growing unto an holy temple in the Lord." In *this* body the apostle supposes, or rather he expects that love may be pre-eminent; not as it is caricatured in the form of a living clerical head, and lifeless *lay* members; not as a regular ordained minister, in his own single person and actions, represents the energy of all the torpid limbs; but as "compact by that which every joint supplieth;" for every part is to be "effectually working;" and then, and not till then, the body may grow, may be increasing in the life of love, or, as Paul expresses it, "unto the edifying of itself in love" (verse 16).

In the epistle to the Romans, he closes the subject of gifts in the church by these remarkable words, "Let love be without dissimulation" (xii. 9), because he evidently supposed that the undissembled love of the saints might find an atmosphere suited to its necessities, where the whole body is *allowed* at least to receive the energies of the Spirit for any form of ministry which it might please the Lord, the Spirit of life, to bestow. But no such atmosphere as this exists, or can exist, when "a regular ordained ministry" has inflicted ministerial death on the whole body, and when the clergyman has been appointed by man to be the sole pastor, teacher, evangelist, ruler, and prophet; just as if the human body, in a fit of lunacy, had elected the hand or the foot to perform the functions of all the other members, which it had commanded, as a consequence of this insane election, to remain in a decorous and reverential inactivity. A body under such discipline would soon die, and all *Christian bodies*, so called, where "the one-man system" prevails, are, in their

corporate capacity, virtually dead; they have cut off the flow of life which was meant to feed all the members, and have given the monopoly of vitality to one favoured limb, which consequently cannot perform its own functions as it ought, and is wholly inefficacious in imparting any show of life to the rest of the body.

In the epistle to the Corinthians Paul says, "Follow after love, and desire spiritual gifts" (1 Cor. xiv.); and the precept is in many ways remarkable. In the 12th chapter he had discoursed at large on the gifts and ministries of the Spirit; in the 13th, by a connection which is not often noticed, he introduces the subject of love, or *agape*, and then he begins the 14th chapter by these words, "Follow after love, and desire spiritual gifts," as a preface to all that he has to say concerning the order of the church in that chapter; so that, in fact, the 13th chapter, though apparently a parenthesis between the 12th and 14th, is most intimately connected with them both. *It is part of the same subject*, because that love, *agape*, or charity, which has been made beautiful to all generations by Paul's magnificent eulogy, is not the charity of isolated Christians, but of the children of God living harmoniously together as one redeemed family, under the guidance and ministrations of the Spirit, and manifesting the life of the body according to God's design, and not according to the wisdom of man. This is that love of which Paul speaks (1 Cor. xiii.); neither is it possible to show that love, or to fulfil the precepts of that much admired chapter where this is not understood; nor can the love of which he speaks be brought forth, or seen *in the body*, wherever the clerical theory has superseded the faith once delivered to the saints. "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, *to the which ye are called in one body*, and be ye thankful" (Col. iii. 15).

But it is not in general principles only that we discover ministry and love united, as if they were different representations of one theme, and as if one did of necessity introduce the other, so that where we see one, we may be sure that the other is not far distant: but we find positive precepts addressed to the saints, directing them to act as pastors to one another, and, in so doing, to show forth this very love, which betokens the living and the growing body of Christ. In the epistle to the Hebrews, it is written, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief . . . . But exhort one another daily while it is called to-day, lest any of you be hardened

through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. iii. 12). They are to warn, to admonish one another *daily*; every day they are to be guarding the sheepfold; every day they are to be looking warily, lest the evil heart of unbelief open a breach for the enemy in the visible household of faith. But whilst they are called upon to be thus watchful for one another's souls, not a syllable is dropped, whereby we might understand that this was to be the exclusive duty of "an ordained minister." Indeed, the fact that such a precept is addressed to "the brethren," renders it impossible that the Hebrews should have been acquainted with "an ordained ministry," invested with those exclusive powers and prerogatives which we habitually in these days consider inseparable from "ministry." The clergy of all parties often assure us in their sermons, that exhortation of the fold is their peculiar province, in which no one may interfere; but we find it quite otherwise in the Word of God.

Paul, in addressing the Thessalonians, writes to them thus: "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient towards all men" (1 Thess. v. 14). Words which exactly describe the duties that "ordained ministers" frequently assure us, devolve upon themselves alone; neither do any of their hearers think otherwise, so naturally do men tread in the sheep-track of tradition, without inquiring if the fair and ample Word of God may have possibly furnished them with more healthful ways. Other passages there are largely to the same effect. "Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, but exhorting one another" (Heb. x. 24, 25). "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. If any man speak, let him do it as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter iv. 10, 11).

B.

THE union of Christians to Christ, their common Head, and by means of the influence which they derive from Him, one to another, may be illustrated by the loadstone. It not only attracts the particles of iron to itself by the magnetic virtue, but by this virtue it unites them one to another.

## THE ANOINTINGS OF THE LORD.

ISAIAH xi. 2-10.

**T**WO anointings are spoken of in Isaiah and for two distinct purposes. In the 11th of Isaiah the blessed Jesus is anointed by the Father for His character as King, and for the righteous rule and government of the kingdom. In Isa. lxi. 1, the Father anoints the Son to His office of Saviour of sinners and of servant while on earth. To the believer the first is the anointing of hope, the other the anointing of faith—one anointing the object of hope, the other the object of faith. He looks to one as a saint, to the other as a sinner. As a sinner, he sees Jesus anointed as a Saviour to put away his sins for ever. As a saint, He looks to Jesus as anointed to fill His place of rule in the coming Kingdom. In 1 Pet. i. 21 faith and hope are both mentioned. It was as a sinner that Mary Magdalene anointed the feet of the Saviour (Luke vii. 37, 38). She saw Him as the Saviour of sinners; He was the object of her *faith*. It was as a saint that Mary of Bethany anointed the Lord (Matt. ii. 6-12; John xii. 3-7). He was the object of her *hope*—"She did it for my burial." She knew that the grave could not keep the body of Jesus, or have power over Him; that His body should not see corruption; but that death was only the passage to the coming kingdom and the coming glory. This is the reason she does not look for His body in the grave. The Lord is anointed by the Father as a Saviour; let us anoint Him as our Saviour. God has anointed Jesus as king; let us anoint Him as our king, so that each one of us may say with the Bride, "While the King sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof" (Cant. i. 12).  
J. G. B.

## A CONTRAST.

Exodus xxv. 17-22. Compare Rev. xi. 19, and xv. 5-8.

**T**HE one picture gives us the ark covered by the mercy-seat, with its cherubims of glory made after the pattern of things in the heavens, in the day of God's covenant with Israel on the ground of the blood. The result is communion and blessing.

The other shows us the Heavenly Temple, with the ark also of the Testament, but without the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat, and the overshadowing cherubims. Here we see God meeting man on the ground of a broken law without blood. Therefore the result of the opened heavens is the out-pouring of the seven vials in which is filled up the wrath of God.  
A. E. W.

## EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

**I**F there is anything of which we might be "divinely certain" it is this, that the Church is not ready for the feeding of strong meat now. We want to get back to first principles (Heb. v. 12), and to get them burned into our hearts by the Holy Ghost. We are satiated with truth so-called in our understandings, but we want the sharp sword with two edges to cut within and without. Therefore if I were to choose a gift, I should rather be given a little word of awakening for the Church than whole volumes of exposition of Scripture. Look at Paul's charge to Timothy. It is no longer "Feed the flock," though this is blessed in its place, but, "Reprove, rebuke, exhort." I tell you truly I have a sort of fear of learning much truth except what one gets experimentally from the Lord. "If the salt have lost its savour, wherewith will ye season it?"

I think separation with us has lost much of its power because of having lost its place. In the mind of the Lord it should be the result of union with Him, and consequent communion of thought and purpose. Separation from darkness is only the negative side of abiding in the light. Christ was holy, harmless, undefiled, and *therefore* separate from sinners. God says to His people, "I will dwell in them . . . wherefore . . . be ye separate." Now if we walk with Him it will make a very distinct separation *as a consequence*. But we shall not need to talk about it. We are in danger of beginning where God ends, and putting separation from darkness before communion with the light, and thus our separation loses its power. Let us seek first a little more likeness to Christ in love and meekness if we would have more true separation. To walk in the light (1 John i. 7), this is separation. God divided the light from the darkness.

**STEP BY STEP.**—A saint should follow the Lord's will, *step by step*, as it is manifested to him, in simplicity, but he too often wants to walk by *sight*, not by *faith*: for when he clearly sees the *first* footstep, he still says, "I do not see my way clear," for he wants to see where it will lead to; whereas the Lord's way is to tell him, "Trust in Me; put your foot *there*, and confide in Me to lead you safely to the next, and to the next." *This* is real simple faith in following Jesus. He only promises to lead us step by step.

## TENT WORK IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES.

CHICAGO, Illinois U.S.A., 6th Oct., 1880.

**M**Y dear brother in Christ,—Thinking that the readers of the “Northern Witness” might wish to know a little of the Lord’s doings on this side of the Atlantic, I send you a few lines regarding the summer’s tent work now closed.

The *Canadian* tent was pitched in Simcoe, a market town in the county of Norfolk, Ontario, in the beginning of June, and meetings were held nightly in it for ten weeks by our brethren in the Lord, Thomas D. W. Muir and John Martin. The attendance at first was not large, owing to misrepresentations made, and untruths circulated by those who ought to have known better. Latterly the interest deepened and increased, and a number professed to get saved, some of whom are now gathered from the sects and systems of men to the name of the Lord. A hall has been secured for winter work, in a good position, and the prayers of God’s children are asked that many precious souls may be plucked as brands from the eternal burning. In the middle of August the tent was removed to Waterford, and the meetings were much better attended; but as to apparent results, I have not as yet heard any particulars.

*New York City.*—After searching New York for eight days in quest of a suitable lot of ground on which to pitch a tent, brother John Smith and I were about leaving, when a piece was offered us at 50 dollars per month, in Twenty-fifth Street, between seventh and eighth Avenues. Though not in the best position, we gladly availed ourselves of it, and on the first week of June began work. The audiences on week evenings were, on the whole, encouraging, as to numbers, and on Lord’s-days the tent was always well filled. Infidels, Sceptics, Deists, Jews, Unitarians, Rationalists, Annihilationists, Restorationists, Christadelphians, as well as members and adherents of so-called orthodox churches, attended. We found in our conversational meetings that there was great ignorance of, and little reverence for, the Word of God. Notwithstanding these and other drawbacks, the Lord gave blessing, and precious souls professed to know Jesus as their Saviour. After continuing meetings nightly in the tent for six weeks, Mr. Donald Ross came from Chicago and followed us. For five weeks he held afternoon Bible readings,

and in the evenings preached the gospel. Believers were much helped by his ministry, and a number of unsaved souls professed to receive Christ, one of whom has since gone to be with the Lord. Some Jews on the street where the tent was pitched, were much opposed to the preaching, and at the end of August subscribed among themselves fifty dollars with which they paid a month’s ground rent to the owner, and by that means caused the brethren to leave.

The meetings were afterwards transferred to, and continued in Hudson River Hall, Twenty-ninth Street between ninth and tenth Avenues.

*Chicago.*—Services have been held in two tents in Chicago during the summer, one in the west end, and the other on the south side of the city, both under the care of Mr. Ross, assisted by Brothers John Bain, John M. Carnie, W. P. Charles, and myself. The west end tent was well filled on Lord’s-days, but on week evenings the attendance was not so good. The meetings on the south side were better. Both tents were taken down in the beginning of September, and two halls have been secured in the neighbourhood of where the tents were pitched. “Union Park Hall,” 543 West Madison Street, formerly a theatre, will seat about 800 persons, and “The Gospel Hall,” 2912 State Street, south side, about 250. Since the return of Mr. Ross from New York he has been preaching in Union Park Hall; and W. P. Charles, and myself, in the Gospel Hall. We have had very encouraging times on the south side. A number have professed conversion, amongst whom are Swedes, Germans, Canadians, Americans, Shetlanders, English, Irish, Scotch, and people of other nationalities. Several “free teas” have been given, and by that means we have been enabled to get at a class of persons who would otherwise have been unreachable.

Before the tent was pitched on the south side there were no believers gathered simply to the name of the Lord; now a little company of between 30 and 40 meet in the Gospel Hall on Lord’s-days to remember *His* dying love.

Chicago is a most important centre, and it is of great moment that the work should be consolidated in it. Forty years ago it was but a village; now it contains a population of over 500,000 souls. According to the census taken a few months ago, it has increased sixty-two per cent. in ten years. The tide of

emigration is rolling west, toward Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, and Colorado; and, if the Lord delay His coming, in a few years Chicago will be largely increased, as it is the metropolis of the west and north-western States. In three months of the present year 12,000 Canadians emigrated to the States, and in twelve months 444,000 Germans. Most emigrants come to the west. There is an immense field for work here. The open ungodliness is appalling. Nearly all the theatres and other places of amusement are open on Lord's-day, and then they are usually best attended.

There is a wide and open door for labourers in Canada and the States. The Macedonian cries are innumerable, and few there are to respond to the call, "Come over and help us." The condition of affairs in the churches is very saddening. Annihilation, Restoration, and Rationalism, are taught in many of the pulpits, and few of the members in the various congregations make any profession of being "born again." A mission hall was opened in this city about 3 months ago, a Baptist began the service, a Unitarian preached the sermon, and a Presbyterian closed the proceedings. And this is what is called "Liberalism!"

There are very few assemblies of believers, gathered simply to the name of the Lord, in the States. Brethren who have been used in the conversion of souls in days gone by, on this continent, have seldom taught separating truth; and their advice to young

converts was, to go where there was a living minister, and where they would be best fed. The result is, that after the lapse of a few years, many who were once bright, devoted Christians, are now cold and dead, and you would scarcely know that they were saved.

In the following cities there are none gathered simply to the name of the Lord. Brooklyn with a population of 554,000. Baltimore, 330,000; Cincinnati, 255,000; San Francisco, 227,000; New Orleans, 207,000; Washington, 160,000; Cleveland, 157,000; Buffalo, 149,000; Newark, 136,000; Milwaukee, 130,000; Providence, 104,000.

In New York, with its 1,200,000 souls, the little gathering does not number more than fifty; and in Montreal, the largest city in Canada, there are only eight or ten in the assembly.

Our brethren, in fellowship with Mr. Darby, have for years been working indefatigably—in *their line of things*—in the States and Canada. Lord Cecil, who has been greatly owned of God, is now preaching in Washington, and Captain Turner in Carolina.

That the Lord may raise up, fit, and thrust forth, many labourers to preach the glorious gospel in this vast continent, to the millions who never hear the simple story of redeeming love, and that He may send those whom He has fitted as teachers to help the scattered flock in the ways of God, is the prayer of,

Yours affectionately in Christ Jesus,  
ALEX. MARSHALL.

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## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NOTE.—Those who endeavour to reply to Questions, desire to impress upon readers their responsibility to "prove all things," and "hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. v. 21). They make no pretension to infallibility, but give their judgment as those who have received mercy of the Lord to be faithful.—Many Questions are received but not replied to; some not being for general edification, whilst others are laid aside from want of sufficient light to deal with them.—It is requested that all communications be accompanied by the Name and Address of the sender.

### QUESTION No. XXXIX.

Is "the Gospel" in 2 Thess. i. 8 the same as in Rev. xiv. 6, 7? and will the rejector of the Gospel now preached have opportunity of being saved through believing the Gospel in Rev. xiv.?

#### REPLY.

There is a sense in which the Gospel in all ages is one and the same. It is glad tidings from God to man. Whatever the special terms of the testimony, it could only be based upon the work of Christ, whether

announced previously to, or since that work was accomplished.

But that the Gospel assumes a form suited to each dispensation in which it is proclaimed, can surely not be questioned.

The Gospel as preached to Adam and Abraham concerned a Messiah to come—the Gospel of the present age concerns the Christ who has come, and has accomplished the putting away of sin by His death.

Old Testament glad tidings are silent as to oneness or joint-heirship with Christ; this special and heavenly



character of the Gospel with which we are familiar is peculiar to this dispensation.

So when the Church, which is the body of Christ, has been completed and gathered up to be for ever with the Lord, the message of God to a guilty world will assume a form suited to that age, as shown in Rev. xiv. 6. We can see no room for a shadow of hope for those who reject the Gospel at this present time. 2 Thess. ii. 10-12 is conclusive as to this. The God whose beseeching grace they have spurned will then send them that strong delusion, which shall sweep them away on its mighty current to everlasting destruction.

QUESTION NO. XL.

*Have I any Scriptural ground for forsaking an assembly of believers who meet to observe the Lord's Supper, because I consider that one or more who go to the table are not walking uprightly? Does 2 Thess. iii. 6 and 14 sanction such a step?*

REPLY.

To forsake an assembly is the very last step that any Christian ought ever to take, and can only be justified when the assembly has so set aside the will of the Lord, and endorsed evil in practice or doctrine, that to remain in it would be confirming them in the sin rather than delivering them from it.

The practice of forsaking a meeting, or sitting apart from those in fellowship, because of the disorderly walk of one or more present, is most unscriptural and mischievous.

Warning, admonition, rebuke, personal dealing with the help of those who are the guides—are all Scriptural methods of dealing with the erring, and this with the view of gaining or restoring—not with the view of getting rid of a troublesome member.

It is possible so to withdraw from a brother that he may feel that one has no fellowship with his evil ways, whilst his sin has not assumed such a form as to warrant his excision from the assembly. To "sit back," as it is called, because of some one present who, it is judged, should not be there, is in effect to judge the whole assembly.

QUESTION NO. XLI.

*Jude 22, 23—"Some" and "others." Are there any such persons now? If so, where are they to be found?*

REPLY.

There are several variations in different manuscripts

as to the reading of these two verses; but the true reading, as settled by the earliest and best manuscripts, is as follows:—

"Some convict, when they are contending; and others save, snatching them out of the fire; and of others have compassion, with fear, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh."

Jude's Epistle contains solemn warning as to ungodly professors, who will creep into the assemblies unawares, and then make divisions, and this especially "in the last days" (compare verses 4 and 17 to 19). But the passage to which this question relates reminds us that we are to discriminate between the wilful perverters of the truth, and those who in greater or less degree have been deceived and misled by them.

With regard to the first, the commandment is, "Convict them, when they are contending." This word is variously translated—convict, reprove, rebuke, etc.; and such passages as—

"Herod being *reproved* by John for all the evils that he had done" (Luke iii. 19);

"Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be *reproved*" (John iii. 20);

"Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather *reprove* them;" "All things that are *reproved* are made manifest by the light" (Eph. v. 11 and 13);

"Them that sin, *rebuke* before all" (Tim. v. 20)—

in all of which the same word is used, will sufficiently show its full force.

In dealing with these wilful corrupters of the truth, then, we are to declare their sin plainly, and rebuke it; but with regard to the unwary ones who have been turned aside by them, we are to make a difference in our action. Not any less hating the corrupt thing, but earnestly seeking to deliver God's children already entangled and contaminated with it.

As to whether these words are applicable in our time, we have already pointed out that they refer especially to the last days; and wherever we look, not only among the sects of Christendom, but also among the assemblies of believers gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus, we can see both the perverters and the perverted.

How much, then, we need the wisdom to discern rightly, in the midst of "confusion and every evil work"—the wisdom which "cometh down from above, and is first pure, then peaceable" (Jas. iii. 17).

## QUESTION No. XLII.

*Will you kindly explain Phil. iii. 11, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."*

## REPLY.

The main subject of the Epistle to the Philippians is Christian experience, and it is summed up in verse 21 of the first chapter, in the expression, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

Having believed on Christ, and so received eternal life, it is now given to us, on Christ's behalf to suffer for His sake (chap. i. 29). Then in chapter ii, we are exhorted to have the same mind which was in Christ Jesus (verse 5), who humbled Himself and became obedient to death, so that God has highly exalted Him; and the exhortation to "work out your own salvation," with which this passage concludes, derives its whole character from the preceding words as to the mind which was in Christ Jesus. For God's way of practical holiness for each one of us, is in teaching us that by the cross of Christ, the world is crucified unto us, and we unto the world.

In chapter iii., Paul tells us how he is striving after what he has pressed upon others, and the expression, "that I may win Christ," in verse 8, seems exactly to correspond with the "work out your own salvation" of the previous chapter. He was not striving to win Christ as a Saviour from wrath, any more than he was desiring the Philippians to *work for* eternal life. They were to *work out* a salvation already theirs; and Paul was continually seeking to win, as his daily power for victory, the Christ whom he had long rejoiced in as his Saviour.

Just, then, as he had exhorted them in their working out of salvation, to have the mind that was in Christ Jesus, he shows how he himself was actuated by the same mind: for if he desired to know the power of Christ's resurrection, it was only in connection with the fellowship of His sufferings, and conformity to His death, if that by any means, he might attain to the resurrection of the dead.

The next verse (12) shows plainly that the object he was striving after was not the resurrection of the body. In this there can be no measure of attainment, but in that which the apostle had set before him, *viz.*, to know the power of Christ's resurrection, he was ever attaining, but only to leave past attainment behind, to press further on in the same course.

The exact form of the original of verses 10 and 11

allies "the sufferings," "the death," and "the resurrection," so closely (the article being prefixed to each, while the qualifying words, "of the dead," literally, "from dead ones," are separated from "resurrection" by a repetition of the article), that there can be no doubt that fellowship of Christ's sufferings, conformity to Christ's death, and attainment to Christ's resurrection are meant.

It is well to know also that the words "high calling" of verse 14, are literally, "upward calling." It is an upward calling, but the uprising is always from death, and therefore involves a first coming down.

## NOTICES.

**BROXBURN.**—Christians in Broxburn, Linlithgowshire, meet in the Mission Hall every Lord's-day at 11 o'clock, to break bread.

**LEVEN, FIFESHIRE.**—Believers meet for Breaking of Bread in Town Hall, on Lord's-day, at 11.30. This small assembly requests prayer for its upbuilding and guidance in the way of truth.

A CONFERENCE FOR BELIEVERS will (*D. V.*) be held in the Gospel Hall, St. Paul Street, Aberdeen, on Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday, 1st, 3rd, and 4th January, 1881. A PRAYER MEETING will be held on Friday evening, 31st Dec., at 7 o'clock, for God's blessing on these meetings. Brethren from all parts are cordially invited.

**HAMILTON, CANADA.**—A CONFERENCE of Christians will be held (*D. V.*) in this city, on 13th to 16th Jan., 1881. Communications addressed, "Conference," Box 219, Hamilton, will receive immediate attention.

## SPECIAL NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS &amp; OTHERS.

THE Firm of GEORGE TURNER & Co. having been dissolved, all Post Office Orders and Cheques are in future to be made payable to "THE PUBLISHING OFFICE," 40 SAUCHIEHALL ST., GLASGOW.

All business communications to be similarly addressed.

Letters for the Editors of the "Northern Witness" and the "Herald of Salvation," may be sent to 40 Sauchiehall Street, as usual.

## IMPORTANT.

Please to inform us before the 5th of December, if we will continue to send to your present address your Standing Order for "Northern Witness," "Herald of Salvation," and other Monthly Magazines for next quarter.

Subscriptions terminate in December, and are Payable in Advance by Post Office Order.

New Orders, and alterations on Standing Orders for "Northern Witness," "Herald of Salvation," and "Monthly Illustrated Leaflet," should reach us not later than 10th of previous month, and for other Magazines on the 15th.

## To Sunday School Teachers.

We would direct the attention of Teachers in Sunday Schools, to a SCHEME OF LESSONS prepared for the year 1881, by Brethren engaged in the work. It has now been issued for several years, and has met with acceptance generally. It may be obtained at

THE PUBLISHING OFFICE, 40 SAUCHIEHALL STREET.

It will greatly oblige the Publishers when any error or irregularity occurs in the supply of the Monthly Papers, that they should be immediately informed of it.

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